

# **Art music in British public discourse during the First World War**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Jane Anne Sarah Angell, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Abstract

This study examines English musical life during the First World War through public musical discourse. It uses contemporary primary sources as its basis, in particular specialist music journals as well as musical comment made in non-specialist papers and magazines. Using these sources to highlight recurrent tropes and to identify ways in which public comment around music changed throughout the course of the war, I identify particularly significant features of wartime musical discourse. The war prompted some musicians in Britain to re-evaluate their position with regard to German music. Since Britain was Germany's enemy, many commentators saw newfound opportunities for British music and musicians, in composition and in performance. Wartime conditions prompted a reconsideration of music's role and relevance, and a significant amount of time and public comment was invested in proving that musical activity was both practical and justifiable. Debate during the war concentrated on both investigating and proving the various uses to which music could be put, including therapeutic ones. My findings show that musicians found many ways to justify their activities during a time of violent conflict. The musical needs of serving troops were discussed and addressed by musicians based in Britain, with widespread recognition that music was of value as recreation and for entertainment, both in rest camps and in the front line, with many musicians travelling to provide music to troops and writing commentary on their experiences in British publications. In this context I demonstrate how notions of taste and discrimination, related to the concept of cultural capital and the dominant class as theorised by Pierre Bourdieu, can be applied to both those who wished to maintain traditional boundaries relating to dominant taste, and those for whom the war caused a temporary reassessment of their position with regard to popular culture or the wishes and tastes of serving troops. Lastly, I note that music and musicians were mobilised in the service of charitable enterprise, both being asked to give their skills in the cause of others, and being the reason for the formation of charitable organisations which benefited both performers and audiences alike. The war challenged British musicians working within art musical fields to justify their activities at a time of national tragedy and armed conflict, and these challenges, increasingly as the war progressed, resulted in an attitude of confidence. For some this confidence was a belief, not shared by all commentators, that British compositions could bear comparison with the best of music from other countries (and particularly Germany). This study concludes that, although art music was and remained a minority interest, the particular conditions of wartime provided temporarily increased audiences and gave a fillip of confidence, engendered by experiences and observations during the war, to those whose livelihoods were bound up in the art-musical sphere, a confidence which persuaded them that there was a continuing place for those activities. The wartime uses, reception and experience of art music demonstrated to practitioners, as well as to commentators and observers outside the sphere of music, that music had a practical as well as an emotional role to play in supporting the war effort, and inspired hopes that this recognition of music's importance would continue after the war.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the generous help and support, both intellectual and practical, of many people and organisations. First amongst these I must name my supervisor Erik Levi, my advisor Paul Harper-Scott and my patient and supportive family, Ian Angell, Emily Angell, and Isobel Angell. The Arts and Humanities Research Council funded this project in its second and third years. Both the AHRC and *Music & Letters* gave generous financial support for me to be able to present papers at international conferences. The music department staff at Royal Holloway University of London, both academic and administrative, has without stint helped with queries, administrative support and additional funding. Many libraries and archives, including the Bodleian, the Royal Academy of Music Library and the Royal College of Music Library, and the Westminster Music Library, gave their expertise and assistance willingly, as did the keepers of the Parry archive at Shulbrede Priory, Laura Ponsonby and Kate Russell, who were generously hospitable as well as helpful. To these and many others, I am extremely grateful.

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## Abbreviations

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| FR         | <i>Fortnightly Review</i>                         |
| IWM        | <i>Imperial War Museum</i>                        |
| MG         | <i>Manchester Guardian</i>                        |
| MH         | <i>Musical Herald</i>                             |
| MIWTC      | <i>Music in War Time Committee</i>                |
| MMR        | <i>Monthly Musical Record</i>                     |
| MOMTR      | <i>Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review</i>     |
| MS         | <i>Musical Standard</i>                           |
| MStud      | <i>Music Student</i>                              |
| MT         | <i>Musical Times</i>                              |
| RAM        | <i>Royal Academy of Music</i>                     |
| RCM        | <i>Royal College of Music</i>                     |
| Ref        | <i>Referee</i>                                    |
| ShulbredeD | <i>Diaries of Hubert Parry (Shulbrede Priory)</i> |
| SR         | <i>Saturday Review</i>                            |
| YMCA       | <i>Young Men's Christian Association</i>          |

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## Chapter One: Introduction

In 1915, composer Rutland Boughton wrote to the editor of the *Music Student*:

Recently, having reason to hunt up music suitable for performance in these horrid and splendid times, I looked through Stanford's songs again [...] I found that my feelings in regard to them had entirely changed. Where before I was bored, now I was moved and excited, and I found in the music values which before I had missed.<sup>1</sup>

Boughton's words highlight more than one point of significance relating to music and the First World War, points which form central strands of this study. Firstly, his realisation that his view of certain music had changed is one example of the way in which the war may be seen as having an impact, not only on ideas of musical taste, but also on views of music's function. Secondly, he describes the times as 'splendid.' Whilst retrospective views often concentrate (and understandably so) on the horror of the First World War and see little that is splendid, this oxymoronic remark, casually made by a composer in the middle of the war, is highly significant.

Historians have long bemoaned that public opinion of the First World War lags far behind historical scholarship's broader and more nuanced view.<sup>2</sup> While not denying the horror, the broader view of the war of the last few decades, revealed by detailed scholarship, has challenged most of the myths of the war. As Dan Todman has noted, 'In recent years, historians have argued persuasively against almost every popular cliché of the First World War.'<sup>3</sup> These clichés have encompassed cultural as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Rutland Boughton, 'Letters to the Editor,' *MStud*, 1/1/1915, 93. He refers to Stanford's *Songs of the Sea* (Op.91, 1904) and *Songs of the Fleet* (Op.117, 1910).

<sup>2</sup> 'Historians today are increasingly aware of the inconsistency between the history of Britain during the First World War and the way in which succeeding generations have perceived that history [...] After more than thirty years of accumulating and studying an archival collection furnishing exhaustive evidence of the contemporary reaction to the war by Britons on active service and at home, this writer never ceases to be surprised at the longevity of myths and imbalanced perceptions of the British experience of the Great War.' Peter Liddle, 'British Loyalties: The Evidence of an Archive,' in *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, ed. Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 523.

<sup>3</sup> 'Although the losses were devastating, their greatest impact was socially and geographically limited. The many emotions other than horror experienced by soldiers in and out of the front line, including comradeship, boredom, and even enjoyment, have been recognised. The war is not now seen as a 'fight about nothing,' but as a war of ideals, a struggle between aggressive militarism and more or less liberal democracy. It has been acknowledged that British generals were often capable men facing difficult

military activity. All war landscapes are as the Paul Nash blighted landscape, in his 'We are making a new world' of 1918.<sup>4</sup> All music is platitudinous song, as depicted in Joan Littlewood's version of *O what a lovely war*.<sup>5</sup> But the totality of war – and this war was the first to be understood as 'total' war<sup>6</sup> – was much broader and more complex than this. It encompassed civilians in a variety of roles, and it had a rich and complex set of emotional responses.

The First World War's derailment of the usual tenor of life in its combatant countries is well recognised. There are, of course, debates about the war's effect: the extent to which, for example, it was the war that caused a complete rupture in the normal development of society, or whether the war placed a brake on developments such as modernist art or accelerated already existing tendencies, or something else again. Without going into too much detail on these various possibilities, although they will be briefly touched on later, this study concentrates on the war years themselves, neither as an end nor as a beginning, neither the collapse of one world nor the start of another, but a period worthy of examination in its own right. This study takes as its basis the very dislocation of the war, the effective pause in the fabric of time at the same moment that it was (of course) inexorably running on in the violence of warfare. It aims to deepen understanding of the war by investigating one strand of musical life, that is, published musical discourse. Within this strand, it aims to bring to life some of the civilian contributors to the story of the war. My specific aim is to depict the rich variety of thought and commentary made about music during the war,

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challenges, and that it was under their command that the British army played a major part in the defeat of the Germans in 1918: a great forgotten victory. [...] None of this has made the slightest difference to what most people actually believe about the First World War.' Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Nash, 'We are Making a New World,' 1918, IWM art catalogue number 1146, which may be viewed online, accessed 1/4/2012, at <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/20070>.

<sup>5</sup> Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop developed the stage musical (later a film) *O What a Lovely War* in 1963, based on Charles Chilton's BBC radio documentary from 1961, *The Long, Long Trail: Soldiers' Songs of the First World War*.

<sup>6</sup> There are various explanations of total war. Charlotte Segond-Genovesi's explanation is that the term encompasses the integration of all resources of a country into the war effort, resources economic and military, human and social, emotional and practical. Total war involves the military side being necessarily dependent on civilian involvement and support, and in some ways vice versa, the demands of the military sustaining the economy of the country. Charlotte Segond-Genovesi, '1914-1918: 'L'Activité musicale à l'Épreuve de la Guerre,' *Revue de Musicologie* 93/2, 2007, 417. Adrian Gregory has taken issue with Trevor Wilson's claim that the term 'total war [...] is meaningless, that all it describes is a "bloody big war". This is to ignore the crucial aspect of ideological transformation that a "total war" brings about. The difference is not merely quantitative, but qualitative.' Adrian Gregory, 'Lost Generations: The Impact of Military Casualties on Paris, London, and Berlin,' in *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, ed. Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 57. His quotation from Wilson is from the latter's *The Myriad Faces of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 669.



by those involved in the creation, performance, criticism and reception of art music during the war years. There are many historians who have aimed to recreate something of the experience of the war, for both civilians and combatant participants.<sup>7</sup> This study contributes to this growing body of scholarship of the culture of the war by giving a contextual picture of the variety of musical commentary in England at the time of the Great War, and of how that commentary interpreted the significance of music.

The approach taken here is a representative survey of public commentary on music written during the war itself. This is a study which uses first-hand primary sources to document response to the war and the speculation about its effects on art music during the war itself. To this end, it is based on close readings of seven of the principal general musical journals of the time – the *Musical News*, *Musical Herald*, *Musical Standard*, *Monthly Musical Record*, *Music Student*, *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review* and the *Musical Times* – in addition to looking at two general circulation newspapers, one daily (the *Daily Telegraph*) and one weekly (the *Referee*), whose music critics were nationally respected and frequently cited in the specialist music press.<sup>8</sup> The choice of publications is designed to give a broadly representative coverage of the variety of public discourse relating to music.

The chronological period covered is from the middle of 1914, just before the outbreak of war, until the spring of 1919, and that is the period for which I studied these sources in detail. Occasional individual comment that is relevant that occurred outside these limits has also been included. I have chosen to end this study in the opening months of 1919, despite the fact that many troops were still mobilised overseas, and therefore the provision of entertainment – to ensure minds were

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Cecil and Liddle's *Facing Armageddon* is an ambitious tome, written on the eightieth anniversary of the Armistice, which attempts a comprehensive coverage of the war experience. Another historian who puts experience centrally, taking an imaginative approach is Peter Englund. His recent work *The Beauty and the Sorrow* (London: Profile, 2011) is a masterly compilation of first-hand accounts giving a sense of the vast reach of the war, revealing the widely varying nature of the different fighting fronts and chronicling some of the variety of experiences of and responses to the war. The book's chief protagonists include a German schoolgirl, an American woman married to a Polish aristocrat living in Poland, a Danish soldier serving in the German army, Italian, French, Belgian and other soldiers, British nurses, and a Venezuelan fighting as a quasi-mercenary, for the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>8</sup> Of the journals I cover in detail, three had publishing affiliations: the *Musical Times* was published by Novello, the *Monthly Musical Record* by Augener and the *Musical Herald* by Curwen. The *Musical Standard* and the *Musical News* were independent publications. The *Music Student* was the journal of the Home Music Study Union, set up by Percy Scholes in 1907, 'designed to increase the intelligent appreciation of music' and to provide 'skilled guidance in music study for both reading and practice.' J. E. Lawrence, 'Correspondence,' *MT*, 1/11/1907, 726.

diverted from the sort of revolutionary thoughts and actions taking place elsewhere in Europe – was in some ways even more essential. However, the topic of music in direct connection with the war itself largely (although not completely) disappeared from the public eye. All studies must have an endpoint: a detailed investigation of music for troops which extended to the end of the period of mobilisation would be very valuable, but as this thesis concentrates on the public discourse in England, and as that discourse relating to music and its connection with the war lessened by March 1919, that is the ending point for this investigation.

It would have been possible to choose from a large number of sources for this project: there were innumerable publications that covered music in some form or another, from the general to the specific, from the national to the local, from the interests of bell-ringers and choral singers to those of brass bands and piano-makers.<sup>9</sup> My choice of journals was made both on the basis of the weight of authority that they carry – these are the journals most widely read by a broad cross section of musical professionals and amateurs – and on the basis of their availability as complete sources, in hard copy. My methodology has been to read each of these journals in as complete a way as possible, gaining a sense of their readership, their topics of interest, as well as their inter-reference (each often refers to an article from another, or to one or other of the serious music critics in national broadsheet or weekly newspapers).

In addition, the two main newspaper sources that I use, the *Referee* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and their main music critics, Lancelot (F.G. Webb) and Robin Legge, were chosen because their words carried authority with specialist music journals. As Stephen Banfield has pointed out, although the nineteenth century had seen the rise of exclusively musical periodicals, serious music criticism at this juncture was most commonly done in the non-specialist press,<sup>10</sup> though a great deal of column space was indeed given to concert reviews in specialist music journals. That Legge and Lancelot

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<sup>9</sup> The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* lists around fifty British music publications of a serial nature published at the time of the First World War, not counting single-issue annual reports or magazines published by colleges and conservatoires. 'Periodicals,' *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: The Music Library Association), Vol.28, 339-573.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Banfield, 'Aesthetics and Criticism' in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain: Vol. 5, The Romantic Age 1800-1914*, ed. Nicholas Temperley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988): 'The century's critical heritage is best preserved in the nonmusical daily papers and weekly magazines,' 465.

should be both named and quoted frequently in the various specialist journals is evidence of the respect of their opinions and the weight they were accorded.

F. Gilbert Webb, the musicologist and critic behind the pseudonymous Lancelot, wrote regularly for dailies in addition to his work on the *Referee*; he was also a co-founder of the *Musical News*.<sup>11</sup> In the later part of the twentieth century he became vice-president of the Musical Association. Robin Legge had received his musical education in Germany and as successor to Joseph Bennett at the *Daily Telegraph* had a position of authority and influence. Despite the conservative nature of the publication for which he wrote, Legge was an open-minded critic and wrote in a no-frills style resulting in a powerful and influential journalism.<sup>12</sup> Meirion Hughes has described him as 'both modern and populist in approach,' noting his European musical training as having made him a keen supporter of 'post-Wagnerian progressivism,' and that he was an early and consistent champion of the music of Delius.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the war, the *Daily Telegraph* publicised its music coverage in other journals, including describing itself in full-page advertisements as 'The Paper That Never Forgets the Musician' and 'Always sane - never sensational'<sup>14</sup>; one advertisement was headed with 'The Paper that Knows the Value of Music in War-Time.'<sup>15</sup> The paper's estimation of its own importance with regard to music was confirmed by Basil Maine some years after the war, when in 1926 he described Legge's office as 'the hub of the musical world.'<sup>16</sup> Although it is sometimes possible to identify certain writers, in most of the specialist music journals, articles were only occasionally attributed and often unsigned.

Such men – and they were usually men, although Percy Scholes at the *Music Student* worked closely with composer Katharine Eggar, who also contributed regular articles to the journal – may be understood to be part of a network of musical commentators, some of whom would have been considered to part of a musical establishment of the press. Many of them, like Legge and Webb, had undergone musical education in

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<sup>11</sup> Information from Tony Gardner in the F. W. Gilbert collection at the Library of the California State University Northridge: CSUN ML90.F73 1769.

<sup>12</sup> Legge in fact encouraged those interested in developing as musicians to pursue all avenues and to listen to all kinds of music to make up their own minds with regard to the merits of each. Robin Legge, 'Hereafter,' *DT*, 18/03/1916, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 61-2.

<sup>14</sup> 'Why Do So Many Musicians Read the Daily Telegraph?' *MStud*, 1/4/1916, 225.

<sup>15</sup> 'The Paper that Knows the Value of Music in War-Time,' *MStud*, 1/1/1917, 156.

<sup>16</sup> Basil Maine, 'Personalities Among Musical Critics VI: Robin Legge,' *MT*, 1/7/1926, 597-8.

Germany in their youth. All had a vested interest in the continuation of their professional lives, inextricably bound up with the continued performance and publishing of music and musical works, during the crisis of the war. But their interest in the continuation and success of widespread musical activity (and success in these terms can be read as the continued acceptance and dissemination of art music as a valid form of activity worthy of attention) was no less vested before the war. What is interesting, as I examine below, is the extent to which the war broadened and altered – or otherwise – their attitudes towards their own specialist spheres.

In addition to the specialist music press and the daily or weekly press that I have used as the basis for this research, I have used biographical or documentary evidence from other sources. Each personal source that I have used, for example the diaries of Hubert Parry, would reward a more detailed study in their own right, but it is appropriate in this context to use them as occasional commentary rather than main focus. This enables the personal to corroborate (or otherwise) the public. Memoirs, either written as diaries during the war, or recollections gathered shortly afterwards, are used as sources to cast occasional light on life in wartime London. In addition to the diaries and memoirs of musicians, I have used the minute books and administrative records of three London conservatoires, and for background and context, three memoirs by non-musicians. These are those by Christopher Addison, a politician; Constance Peel, a journalist and writer in matters of domestic economy among other things, who in the latter part of the war became co-director of women's service for the Ministry of Food;<sup>17</sup> and Michael MacDonagh, a political journalist for *The Times*.<sup>18</sup> An invaluable addition to these published and unpublished memoirs has been the material available in the Women's Work Collection in the Imperial War Museum. This collection was begun in 1917 and largely amassed by volunteers, whose main objective was 'the compilation of a thorough record of women's wartime activities.'<sup>19</sup> From a musical point of view, the collection of resources under the heading of 'Benevolent Organisations' is especially rich. For my purposes here,

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<sup>17</sup> Deborah S. Ryan, 'Peel, Constance Dorothy Evelyn (1868–1934),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, accessed 22/1/2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56783>.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Addison, *Four and a Half Years: A Personal Diary from June 1914 to January 1919* (London: Hutchinson, 1934); Mrs C. S. Peel, *How We Lived Then 1914–1918: A Sketch of Social and Domestic Life in England During the War* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1929); Michael MacDonagh, *In London During the Great War: The Diary of a Journalist* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1935).

<sup>19</sup> Susan R. Grayzel, 'Introduction to A Change in Attitude: The Women's Work Collection of the Imperial War Museum,' accessed 24/10/2013, <http://www.tlmea.com/introduction.asp#Intro>.

although there is undoubtedly a wealth of archival material in the collection that would reward further investigation, I have concentrated on that which relates to the musical charities that I focus on in chapter six. These include a report compiled at the request of the Imperial War Museum's Women's Work Sub-Committee by the Committee for Music in War-Time.<sup>20</sup> There are significant quantities of material relating to Lena Ashwell and her wartime work in this resource as well, although in this respect I have largely relied on the research of Ashwell scholar Margaret Leask.

As the main enquiry of this study relates to published discourse, I have set against this focus on printed commentary a series of illustrative pages, which I have called 'Materialities'. These pages are designed to function as material illustrations of the world to which the commentators that I use here are referring.<sup>21</sup> Some of this illustrative material is literally a materiality, an artefact: a photograph, a piece of sheet music, some wartime cigarette cards. In other cases the content is illustrative of events or ideas that occur in the printed commentary, for example the pages on King Albert's Book, or the content highlights other rich areas for enquiry that this thesis cannot cover, but which nonetheless form a part of the whole, for example the page on the gramophone. In some cases the material is analytical, or it provides illuminative data. Where possible I have used first-hand testimony, from diaries, letters, or interviews, to illuminate the material. In all cases these pages are inserted into the main narrative as counterpoints to the study, to ground the commentary on which I focus in the material world. Where relevant, these inserts are also referred to in the course of this study.

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<sup>20</sup> 'Record of the Music in War-Time Committee 1914–1920,' Women at Work Collection, IWM, London: B.O.7 2/4, hereafter Record of the Music in War-Time Committee.

<sup>21</sup> To highlight the nature of these inserts as parallel to the main discourse, I have used a different font.

**Materiality 1** *Ye Mariners of England* by Thomas Dunhill: a musical supplement included in the *Monthly Musical Record* of February 1915

February 1, 1915.] THE MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD

THOMAS F. DUNHILL  
YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND  
Unison Song for Treble Voices

Allegro vigoroso

VOICES

PIANO

Ye Mar - in - ers of  
The spli - its of your  
Brit - an - nia needs no  
The me - teor flag of

Eng - land That guard our na - tive  
fa - thers Shall start from e - vry  
bul - warks, No towers a - long the  
Eng - land Shall yet ter - rif - lo

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THE MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD [February 1, 1915.]

seas! Whose flag has braved a  
wave For the deck it was their  
steep; Her march is o'er the  
burn; Till dan - gers trou - bled

thou - sand years The bat - tle and the  
field of fame, And O - cean and the  
moun - tain waves, Her home is on the  
night do - part And the star of peace re

breeze. Your glor - ious stan - dard  
grave. Where Blake and might - y  
deep. With thun - ders from her  
turn. Then, then ye o - cean

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launch a - gain To match an - oth - er  
 Nel - son fell Your man - ly hearts shall  
 na - tive oak She quells the floods be  
 war - ri - ors, Our song and feast shall

for: And sweep through the  
 glow, As ye sweep through the  
 low As they roar on the  
 flow. To the fame of your

deep, While the storm - y winds do blow While the  
 deep, While the storm - y winds do blow While the  
 shore, When the storm - y winds do blow While the  
 name, When the storm has ceased to blow When the

THE MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD [February 4, 1915.]

bat - tle ra - ges loud and long  
 bat - tle ra - ges loud and long And the  
 bat - tle ra - ges loud and long And the  
 fier - y fight is heard no more, And the

storm - y winds do blow!  
 storm - y winds do blow!  
 storm - y winds do blow!  
 storm has ceased to blow!

*poco rit.*

*Ye Mariners of England* set words by Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) to music by Thomas Dunhill. The poem had been set to music several times before the war, including by H.H. Pierson in 1870, published by Novello in a collection under the title *Songs of Heroism*, which in its turn was reworked by its composer into a German patriotic song under the title *O Deutschland Hoch in Ehren*. This was republished and became popular in Germany during the First

World War.<sup>22</sup> Other British wartime settings of Campbell's words were made, e.g., in a version published by Weekes, with music by Theodore Atherling in 1917. The fluid nature of patriotic sentiment is demonstrated by the fact that although the song lyrics were originally written at a time when the naval foe depicted was France, this posed no barrier at all to using of the same lyrics at a time when France was now Britain's ally. The poem refers to the need to 'match another foe,' rendering it eminently suitable for its use in the First World War.

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<sup>22</sup> Nicholas Temperley, 'Pierson, Henry Hugo,' *Grove Music Online*, accessed 8/11/2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21728>.



## 1.1 The War and Society

The First World War saw the introduction of many changes to society, some temporary and some longer lasting, and many of these and their impact can be seen in the pages of musical commentary and in first-hand memoirs of the period written by musicians. Such things as the introduction of restricted lighting, the difficulties in obtaining petrol, and transport difficulties generally are all referred to in the pages of memoirs by Alice Elgar, Mark Hambourg and Hubert Parry.<sup>23</sup> People living in Britain during the First World War found their lives transformed by a degree of state intervention unknown before, and felt the impact of regulations and experiments designed in various ways to assist in the war effort: these included food shortages, and eventually rationing; the introduction of licensing hours; daylight saving; conscription; increased taxation and many other elements.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the war came to British soil in unprecedented ways, first through coastal bombardment in the northeast, and then in the form of air raids from both Zeppelins and later aircraft. This was a society utterly embroiled in war, and the level of material impact of the war should be borne in mind when considering the context of the commentary under examination here.

The early decades of the twentieth century were already a period of change, not simply because of the war: social, political and technological change was in the air. To some extent, of course, this is always so, but the decades of the very late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries are widely recognised as a period of particularly rapid change. That the war itself fundamentally changed the lives of those who immediately participated in it should not blind us to the fact that this was in any case a time of ferment in many ways; Jose Harris contends, for example, that rather than being the cause of profound social change, the First and Second World Wars merely accelerated and channelled existing attitudes.<sup>25</sup> With regard to music,

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<sup>23</sup> Hambourg's memoir is M. Hambourg, *From Piano to Forte: A Thousand and One Notes* (London: Cassell, 1931). Material from Alice Elgar's diaries is found in many of the chapters in Lewis Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses! Elgar and The Great War* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2001) and specifically in that volume, in Martin Bird, 'An Elgarian Wartime Chronology,' 388-456. Parry's diaries are referred to throughout this study, and can be consulted at Shulbrede Priory, Linchmere, Haslemere, West Sussex, where they are in the care of the Hon. Laura Ponsonby.

<sup>24</sup> For detail relating to the effects of the war on society, see Gerard DeGroot, *Blighty: British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London: Longman, 1996) and Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991).

<sup>25</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 251.

technological changes such as the player-piano and the gramophone player were gradually making themselves felt, with varied reactions from those in musical professions, though perhaps Landon Ronald was unusual in his positive and proactive work in this field. Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, Ronald was consultant and often also accompanist for the Gramophone Company, founded in London in 1897. In addition to the potential threat of the gramophone and that of player-pianos,<sup>26</sup> popular music was challenging the available listener pool, for example with ragtime. The very nature of popular entertainment had been changing from the late nineteenth century as music-hall entrepreneurs like Oswald Stoll began to create larger music-halls designed to appeal to all sections of society, including the most respectable.<sup>27</sup> The fast pace of technological change was nipping, if as yet still only gently,<sup>28</sup> at the heels of those whose livelihood was bound up with traditional forms of musical performance and practice, and the debates about how it was to move forward in the new century were not yet particularly urgent.

Such debates were nothing new; as regards popular music, for example, Derek Scott has convincingly demonstrated that the division between serious and light music, and the development of popular music as an industry, was already well established in the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> However, the war prompted a revival of debate about serious and light culture, and high and low taste. In particular, debate focused on how Britons in musical spheres were to increase both their share of public awareness and material success, as well as positive critical reception. Material success, in some cases an acute need for musicians whose livelihood had been adversely affected by the war (as I discuss below) could mean not only being engaged to perform or to compose, but being sufficiently financially remunerated to make a comfortable living from their

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<sup>26</sup> Public negative commentary on these topics in the music press is not really evident, the *Musical Times*, for example, reporting very positively about British player-pianos and gramophones in 1913. 'The British Music Exhibition,' *MT*, 1/10/1913, 663.

<sup>27</sup> See John Baxendale's article "'... into Another Kind of Life in Which Anything Might Happen..." Popular Music and Late Modernity, 1910–1930,' *Popular Music*, 14/ 2, 1995, 137–154, in particular 140.

<sup>28</sup> Cyril Ehrlich has pointed out that the real nature of the changes to affect music from the new technologies was not in fact apparent before the war: 'save for a few enthusiasts, the gramophone was still a mere toy, radio a carrier of message, the cinema a childish pastime and the motor car a prerequisite of the rich who were already equipped with their Bechstein grands. Fundamental adjustments had been made to new technology and patterns of trade. The future seemed secure.' Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (1976; revised edition Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 158.

<sup>29</sup> Derek B Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially chapter 4, 'The Rift between Art and Entertainment,' 85ff.

musical activity.<sup>30</sup> This was part of the decades long debate about the influence of the foreigner, an old topic refreshed and reinvigorated by the war. Commentators on these topics may be seen to have a vested interest in continuity and not change, although many – Legge in particular – were supportive of new initiatives and encouraging of native composers. When I come to speak later, therefore, of the war providing (or being seen to provide) new opportunities for music and musicians, one possible interpretation is that the classical or art music sector of the musical world saw an opportunity to re-establish ground that may have been perceived as shaky or under imminent threat.

The commentary I focus on here can be subjected to a theoretical examination on the basis of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, and of the significance of taste and discrimination, as found most particularly in his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.<sup>31</sup> As well as demonstrating how Bourdieu's concepts can be mapped on to my findings, I also articulate in conclusion a tentative challenge to the applicability of his view in the melting pot of wartime, a time in which the sudden enforced broader picture, for those who chose to see it, gave rise to a naiveté with regard to both class and taste. These ideas are explored in the concluding chapter.

Before I examine the application of Bourdieu's theory to the material under examination here, it is timely to raise a question of terminology which challenges anyone working in this field. I have already used the term 'art music' without any further elaboration, and in academic terms it will stand on its own to clarify the type of music under discussion. However, it was not a term used at the time, and the kind of music discussed in the journals I examine was as often as not just described as music, sometimes 'serious' music, and very often simply 'good' music. This question of what constitutes 'good music' has to be considered in view of the fact that a great

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<sup>30</sup> On the topic of success in musical life, one measure of success is the extent to which musicians could claim to be established securely in their professional life, composing or performing, for example. Lewis Foreman has brought to light a striking example of the contrast between those successful or established and those yet to establish themselves in the period just before the war in his publication of some letters from Havergal Brian. Brian was particularly distressed at being forced to compose 'potboilers' in order to earn money, which he called 'the blasted muck Curwen's publish.' In addition, although in the interwar period Brian joined the staff of *Musical Opinion*, at this time he was highly critical of those who wrote musical articles: 'I would rather work in the open on a farm and have my mind free to roam undisturbed and unbridled, than join this motley army [...] They are all a lot of jackals.' Havergal Brian to Granville Bantock, 6/1/1914 and 30/1/1914, in L. Foreman, *From Parry to Britten: British Music in Letters 1900–1945* (London: Batsford, 1987), 55 and 58.

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

deal of wartime debate related to the provision of 'good' music for audiences and troops, and how to maintain such music in a time of crisis.

The views taken by many of the critics who wrote on music during this period were – like all writers – inevitably coloured by their own more or less overt ideologies. I will investigate these ideas below in terms of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, but we must initially address the beliefs of the critics in regard to 'good' music. The musical mainstream, on which I concentrate here, was broadly conservative. It is possible to correlate their writings with their notional ideas of both what constituted 'good' music and why its propagation and promulgation were important.

The thorny question of what constitutes 'good' music comes down in part to taste, a perennial matter for discussion since long before Kant. At its most basic, the question must be relative: 'good' music is whatever a listener deems good. Complications arise when one idea of good is deemed superior (as is usually the case, and as is clear when we examine musical commentary in Bourdieusian terms, below) but also when the term is used with a clearly implied meaning, one which others are expected to share or at the very least understand. Such debates are ongoing: in his 2013 Reith Lectures, Grayson Perry, the visual artist, addressed the issue with regard to art and his first lecture was titled, 'Democracy has Bad Taste'. The questions he asks could have been asked a century ago, although, as I will examine below, there was significantly less self-awareness around such issues then.<sup>32</sup>

The first element common to all definition of 'good' music at this time is one of exclusion. Good music is defined as much by what it is *not* as by what it *is*. And although, as my discussion below will investigate, boundaries between genres and musical spheres became temporarily more porous during the war, the commentators under scrutiny here opposed 'good music' to, in most cases, 'popular music'. This brings us in turn to class. Derek Scott has noted that Hubert Parry drew a parallel

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<sup>32</sup> 'I want to talk about the issue of quality because I think this is one of the most burning issues around art – how do we tell if something is good? And who tells us that it's good? That's perhaps even more important. And of course now, in the art world as it is, does it really matter? And I want to talk about what are the criteria by which we judge art made today. There's no easy answer for this one because many of the methods of judging are very problematic and many of the criteria used to assess art are conflicting. We have financial value, popularity, art historical significance, or aesthetic sophistication. All these things could be at odds with each other.' Grayson Perry, 'Democracy has Bad Taste,' 2014 Reith Lectures, BBC, accessed 24/4/2014, <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio4/transcripts/lecture-1-transcript.pdf>.

between music-hall songs and the speech of Cockneys, both being 'the result of sheer perverse delight in ugly and offensive sound.'<sup>33</sup>

To try to define popular music or even to undertake a basic investigation into music and class at this era would be to risk a never-ending series of digressions. What is needed for our purposes here is some working definition of 'good' music as used by the commentators who form the main contributors of the material under examination. If we take as read that good music in this context means the concert hall (and not the music-hall, a provisional distinction which will be qualified later when I discuss music provided for the troops) then we are left with what is broadly defined today as 'classical' or as 'art music.' Though these terms are common enough now, Howard Goodall, in his recent television series *Howard Goodall's Story of Music*, defined art music as 'music for posh people.'<sup>34</sup> Perhaps motivated by a desire to avoid charges of elitism, this way of looking at it, less than helpful and inaccurate as it may be, in fact brings us to the heart of these efforts to identify and discuss 'good' music. From whichever angle we approach music in this era, we come across issues of class. To those working class people for whom art music was as dear and precious a possession as to any member of high society (a high society, we must not forget, often accused of cultural philistinism)<sup>35</sup> such notions would have been ridiculous. Good music was for all, whether or not accessibility to it was the same for all.<sup>36</sup> This is not the place to digress into what Howard Goodall might have meant by 'posh,' but it is important to remind ourselves how all such classifications are relative. In addition, the backbone of the concert audience had always been the middle classes.<sup>37</sup> They knew and loved music. To those looking from the other side with an assumption that all working-class people liked only music-hall, evidence of 'good taste' in music among the working

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<sup>33</sup> Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis*, 187, quoting a Parry speech of 1899.

<sup>34</sup> Howard Goodall, writer and presenter, 'Howard Goodall's Story of Music,' first presented BBC2 March 2013.

<sup>35</sup> In fact, this very philistinism has caused scholar Simon Gunn to note limits to the applicability of Bourdieu's theories to English society: 'There is indeed a long tradition of writing, stretching from Marx and Engels through Matthew Arnold, in which the landed and middle classes in Britain (and more especially England) are depicted as singularly cultureless.' Simon Gunn, 'Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective,' *British Journal of Sociology*, Special Issue: The Concept of Cultural Capital and Social Inequality 56/1, 2005, 49. In fact, Gunn's argument is that class in England, until the end of the First World War, related primarily to culture and morals rather than to socio-economic status: he also disputes the 'cultureless' idea and succeeds in disproving it in his article.

<sup>36</sup> See Alan Bartley, *Far From the Fashionable Crowd: The People's Concert Society and Music in London's Suburbs* (Newbury: Whimbrel Publishing, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> William Weber, 'Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism,' in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. David C. Large and William Weber (London: Cornell University Press, London, 1984), 28-71.

classes was often taken and received with surprise. I examine these ideas in more detail below.

What we now refer to as classical or art music (to distinguish it from popular, or 'world' music, another problematic term) was in the period under scrutiny here often simply called good or sometimes serious music, though of course the terms used depend on the speaker's point of view. I have chosen to use the term 'art music' to clarify that my study focuses on commentary relating to music of the concert hall, the chamber concert, the opera stage, and not the music-hall or popular music, though all such definitions are in any case artificial and fluid. Such terms are used to classify, to reassure, to explain, to avoid surprises. But I argue below that any fixed concept of high and lowbrow, in any case not really fixed at all, can and should be challenged, and are certainly challenged by the war. Even those whose views were rigidly held before the war found that the war itself forced upon them at the very least a temporary rethink of prejudices. Such prejudices are most clearly seen in discussion of music for troops during the war, and while this is not the place for discussion of such issues which are covered in chapter five (and in particular in the work of Lena Ashwell who insisted the troops must be given only 'good' music), it is significant to note that the concept of good in direct opposition to music deemed inferior was a common trope of the war.

Good music, then, leaving aside individual preferences for particular periods, or disagreement about modern composers, meant concert music, naturally allowing for a wide variation in programming choices. There was no doubt a degree of hierarchy between concerts, with perhaps Chappell's and Boosey's 'Ballad' Concerts on a different plane to the Queen's Hall Symphony Concerts, or the Royal Philharmonic Society: Leanne Langley has demonstrated how the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts developed in style from a ballad-style event, with many shorter numbers, to a more serious format.<sup>38</sup> It meant what is currently generally and popularly called classical music. This ranged from the small scale – that is, songs, although the song genre is another one with a porous boundary on a scale of songs, as this is a form found in every type of music 'good' or otherwise – to the large (symphonies, operas) though in the case of music for those serving in the forces overseas, music performed

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<sup>38</sup> Leanne Langley, 'Banker, Baronet, Saviour, "Spy": Sir Edgar Speyer and the Queen's Hall Proms 1902–1914,' *The Proms and British Musical Life*, 23-25/4/2007, British Library, accessed 21/10/2013, <http://www.leannelangley.co.uk/documents/BankerBaronetSaviourSpy.pdf>.

was often restricted in scale because of the limitations of travel, cost, safety, personnel, and so on.

Why did the insistence on good music become so important during the war? Such issues were not new questions which arose in the war by any means, and should be seen as part of a continuum, both pre- and post- war: this was a matter of long-standing debate. It became more urgent during the war because of the necessity for justifying all forms of activity, particularly those perceived as being of non-essential or even of the nature of a luxury (and see chapter four below). This, in turn, meant that the arguments behind it needed to have particular weight and force to stand up against the weight of popular music and technological developments.

Music at this era was taking place in a rich and uneven social terrain. London had its principal concert halls of national and international repute, large and small, but music was also taking place all over greater London and the whole country in assembly rooms, working men's institutes, local music schools, village and town halls and so on. Sometimes these differing worlds mixed. The People's Concert Society, for example, was giving concerts of chamber music with well-known performers at very low prices, for example, but found that the concerts then inevitably attracted audiences who could easily have afforded tickets elsewhere, and were not the target audiences of the organisation. Alan Bartley has noted that this was a perennial problem for the Society. (One partial solution was to price a limited number of seats more expensively, designed to attract those who might care about not being seen to mingle with those of a lower class, thus preserving the majority of seats for those who could only afford the modest prices.)<sup>39</sup> In addition to traditional concert venues, there were music-halls of all types, and towards the second decade of the twentieth century the creation of such higher-calibre establishments as the Palladium and Coliseum was extending the reach and also the range of programmes put on at the music-hall, designed to appeal to better off or higher class audiences.

Part of the significance of the role of music during the war was that the successful prosecution of the war was entirely reliant on the willing co-operation of the vast majority of the population. It was therefore nationally important to win the hearts and minds of the people. It can thus be seen that a pursuit often deemed elitist –

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<sup>39</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 75.

classical or art music – needed to work particularly hard to stake its claim to a role in public life at this time. For fear of being swamped by the masses, critics fought hard to prove that their own particular brand of culture should be maintained. This is clearly understandable in terms of cultural capital, in the sense that Pierre Bourdieu used it, and which I examine in more detail below. Taste in music, among other things, is often used as a signifier of class, and certain kinds of music traditionally relate very closely to the dominant class. What is particularly interesting in the war years themselves, however, is the extent to which the promotion of art music as essential was an attempt by the dominant class or dominant taste makers to preserve their own status quo, and to impose their values on others, or whether the war years can reveal a different possible interpretation, albeit temporary, of the views of those with a stake in the maintenance of their own cultural capital. I will argue later that one possible interpretation is to say that those involved in the classical music world, whilst not wishing to lose their own influence, such as it was, nor their livelihood, were also genuinely (if temporarily) interested in the wider extension of the franchise of art music, for reasons not altogether selfish. I also suggest later that the war provided conditions in which those involved in music saw a chance to privilege art music over other forms of entertainment, whether that was in seeking to grow its market share or to prevent its erosion, but that motivations were more complex than might first appear to be the case.

## 1.2 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, Class, Taste – and the War

One of the many effects of the war was to bring into closer contact members of differing classes, whether that was young women from privileged backgrounds in paid or voluntary employment for the first time, or the mingling of classes that occurred due to the volunteer identity of the new armies called into being because of the conflict.<sup>40</sup> The war brought into being a new, if temporary, mixed mass of people. This group was not only introduced to the consciousness of many who had not considered classes or tastes outside their own before – consider the somewhat surprised attitudes of several musical commentators when confronted with the musical tastes of the ordinary soldier, or the degree of appreciation that such soldiers

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<sup>40</sup> See for example, Susan Grayzel's research into women's roles during the war: Susan Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).



showed for art music<sup>41</sup> – but was effectively a potential new group of music consumers. The war became in essence a species of time out of time, a divergence of the normal flow. In turn, this created, as I examine in this study, conditions in which the very act of music making, and certainly the validity of musical listening as a public activity, including concert going and musical participation in various forms, were all questioned. This was a potentially tense mix of classes and the sudden influx of volunteers into the army, the vast majority of whom were initially trained in Britain, meant that there were large populations of men for whom entertainment became an important question early on.<sup>42</sup> The relatively small sector of the music market held by art music, therefore, suddenly had a potential new audience. This had implications for those involved in all spheres of music making and leads us to a consideration of ideas of cultural capital. I discuss below certain views of the war which saw it as a great opportunity for British music and musicians, which might also be understood as, for some, opportunism: those involved in music, and those who commented on it, saw a chance to extend their sphere of influence.

How can this be understood theoretically? Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, in particular in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, provides a useful lens through which to examine this period. The question of class is a key element of Bourdieu's research in *Distinction*, and class has formed an important part of First World War scholarship both for historians and sociologists.<sup>43</sup> In a world in which art music commentators, accustomed to writing for people already in the habit of concert-going, suddenly found themselves or their readers moving in new spheres, how do Bourdieu's findings in *Distinction* fit?

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<sup>41</sup> This will be discussed in chapter 5.

<sup>42</sup> Useful studies of the considerations of mass entertainment needs for the troops include Gordon Williams, *British Theatre in the Great War: A Re-Evaluation* (London: Continuum, 2005), and L. J. Collins, *Theatre at War 1914–18* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998). Basil Dean's account of his World War II experiences with ENSA also include reminiscences of the situation regarding entertainment in World War I: Basil Dean, *The Theatre at War* (London: Harrap, 1956). These works are discussed below.

<sup>43</sup> For example, the work of Arthur Marwick, including *The Deluge*. Alastair Reid has focused on 'World War I and the Working Class in Britain,' in *Total War and Social Change*, ed. Arthur Marwick (London: Macmillan, 1988), 16–24. Other scholars to have considered class include John Keegan, whose *The Face of Battle* includes the Battle of the Somme and a discussion of the effect of the mixing of classes and its effect on the post-war world: J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking, 1976) and Eric J. Leed, both in his more recent *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and in his earlier article, 'Class and Disillusionment in World War I,' *Journal of Modern History* 50/4, 1978, 680–699. See also Bernard Waites, *A Class Society at War: England 1914–18* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1988).

For Bourdieu, one's taste in music is an essential marker of class: 'nothing more clearly affirms one's "class", nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music.'<sup>44</sup> In 1960s France, the field of his research for *Distinction*, the dominant class expressed easy familiarity with Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* or his *Piano Concerto for the left hand* and Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier* or *The Art of Fugue*<sup>45</sup> whereas the dominated preferred the *Blue Danube*, and *La Traviata*, with the middlebrow showing a liking for *Rhapsody in Blue*. Whether or not such specific findings can be legitimately applied to 1914 England – or even present day England – is a moot point, and not strictly germane to the matter in hand. What *is* pertinent is Bourdieu's point that possession of cultural capital is simultaneously possession of 'instruments of power and stakes in the struggle for power.'<sup>46</sup> Cultural capital, whether inherited or acquired, through breeding or schooling, has a real material impact on the field of social interaction. If it is a concept essential to understanding any broad socio-cultural field, then it has particular weight and interest at a time of such social upheaval as the First World War. As Bourdieu noted, 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.'<sup>47</sup> At a time when the country was engaged in physical struggle and mobilising all classes of people, placing them in unprecedented proximity, then these questions become very visible. If the ease that comes from familiarity with culture is a marker of power, then access to culture, and the value of cultural capital, raises questions of equality, education and legitimacy – all elements which must be considered in any study of wartime musical activity.

I noted above that the First World War was a time of social collision. Even if the majority of the aristocracy who volunteered for the armed forces received commissions as officers, they were often in close command of working men, a proximity which for many was unfamiliar. In addition, the ranks themselves were made up of all classes, and though the working class may have been more numerous, the educated working class and the middle class made up a significant proportion. For all, wartime conditions often meant an introduction to another way of being, be that in musical taste, social habit, or way of speech. This was not merely the experience of the armed forces: many of those who took on war work found themselves in unusual situations. For our purposes here, what this meant was that

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<sup>44</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Interestingly Bourdieu notes that those whose cultural capital is acquired by birth prefer Ravel and those on whom it has been conferred by education prefer Bach. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 68.

<sup>46</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 315.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, xxix.

those from the relatively closed world of the music journal, or the music columns of national papers, found themselves necessarily either experiencing or judging types of people as well as types of music that most had hitherto not experienced. How the commentators reacted, and how music came to be seen as an important part of this collision of worlds, adjusting attitudes or seeking opportunities to continue with established views, is the focus of this study.

For Bourdieu, 'art and cultural consumption are predisposed consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.'<sup>48</sup> To study the progress of the war is to study a constellation of attitudes and exigencies brought into being by the war: a melting pot into which these social differences were thrown. Among other things, in the resulting kaleidoscope of fragments, we can see evidence that corresponds with Bourdieu's view that the 'sacred sphere of culture' is defined by its denial of popular enjoyment where all 'popular' is defined as 'natural'.<sup>49</sup> He explicitly sets the 'lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile' against the 'sacred sphere of culture'<sup>50</sup> and the First World War is an ideal environment in which such clashes came to the fore. But we can also see in the very temporary nature of this particular set of circumstances occasions on which from time to time and exceptionally, the high priests of culture were forced, if only temporarily, to allow a broader definition of what form acceptable culture might take.

At the root of the matter is an ambivalence. The complexities of the musical discourse under scrutiny here are precisely related to the problem cultural arbiters have of both wishing to extend their own sphere of influence and by implication the popularity of their own views and tastes, while at the same time retaining that rarity value which is the hallmark of distinction, in the Bourdieusian sense:

Intellectuals and artists are thus divided between their interest in cultural proselytism, that is, winning a market by widening their audience, which includes them to favour popularisation, and concern for cultural distinction, the only objective basis of their rarity; and their relationship to everything concerned with the 'democratisation of culture' is marked by a deep ambivalence.<sup>51</sup>

The First World War is the example *par excellence* of this division.

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<sup>48</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, xxx.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 226.

We can see that the basic tenets of *Distinction* are identifiable in the many strands of thought which underpin the commentary that forms the basis of this research. I noted above Bourdieu's view that 'art and cultural consumption are predisposed [...] to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.'<sup>52</sup> It is clear, as William Weber has noted, that much of the development of art music over the course of the nineteenth century, and indeed much of its history within circles of influences such as court and church, show that musical taste of the elite has been strongly influenced by the evolution of concert etiquette and perceived superiority of taste and judgement.<sup>53</sup> Bourdieu's work, in *Distinction* and elsewhere, has demonstrated that the possession of cultural capital equates to the possession of power, power to include or to exclude.<sup>54</sup> Those who would seek power, or seek to improve their chance at influence, or merely to climb the social ladder, must thus acquire such capital.

Where art music is involved, taste and discrimination have proved essentially shifting and yet powerful. One strand of my argument in this study is that whilst musical commentary began the war in a climate of exclusivity, where commentators were concerned over the spread of popular culture and the threat it posed to the superiority of judgment and taste that they had hitherto enjoyed unchallenged, albeit in their own small spheres, during the course of the war there was a temporary lull or perhaps better described as a temporary truce. The magnitude of the suffering imposed by the war and the recognition it gave to the communal labour of the country in a united cause was the means by which certain commentators allowed that a variety of tastes might be legitimated. The activity of those musicians and musical commentators who saw in the war a chance to extend the reach of art music to a wider audience would have had various motivations. Some, no doubt – and we will return to some examples – were part of a general wish to maintain the status quo of musicians and musical life: high culture should remain that. But for many the war was a chance to provide access to high culture. Alan Bartley's examination of the motives behind several nineteenth-century schemes for providing music to those for whom it was not normally either affordable or accessible shows that such attitudes pre-dated the war.<sup>55</sup> This study both asserts the truth of Bourdieu's view that art

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, xxx.

<sup>53</sup> Weber, 'Wagner, Wagnerism, and Musical Idealism,' 28-71.

<sup>54</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 88.

<sup>55</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 23.

legitimizes social difference and at the same time seeks to provide an alternate inspiration for at least some of the activities of musicians during the war.

Bourdieu's assertions about the desire for dominance of those who sought to maintain and perpetuate power via various means of capital, including cultural, should also be seen in the light of those studies which examine those who believed that 'good' music was not the prerogative of the few but deserved to be available to the many. Such ideas are examined in the field of all cultural endeavours by Jonathan Rose in his *Intellectual Life of the Working Classes*<sup>56</sup> and in specific relation to music by Alan Bartley, as we have seen. Those who sought to make art music available to the working classes were expressing the ambivalence referred to above, and identified by Bourdieu. Whilst attempting to dominate, that is, to establish the superiority of their own view, they were also seeking to extend the purview and popularity of their own musical tastes, thus risking their exclusivity. Bourdieu's argument holds that what becomes 'popular' loses its cachet, and therefore its 'distinction' – and those who wish to maintain superiority of taste and their hold on power and influence adjust their tastes accordingly. But the war may provide a test case for a tentative suggestion that there are, in certain instances, circumstances in which this ambivalence may be tolerated for longer than might otherwise be the case.

This study, then, examines a selection of published musical commentary from the First World War, and aims to increase understanding of the variety of views regarding music and its place in the England of the time. As such, it also aims to contribute to the growing body of research in this field.

### 1.3 Literature Review

The field of cultural studies has had a recent and most welcome increase of interest with regard to the early twentieth century, and specifically relating to the First World War, and this thesis should form a small contribution to the area. In particular, it positions itself alongside the growing interest in recent years in specialist works relating to culture during the war, including the high culture of the war.

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<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

Studies of cultural aspects of the war have appeared in various contexts that reveal both its importance and its relevance: the culture of the war has been studied over recent decades both as part of the chronological sweep of the period, and in and of itself. Certain specialist studies have highlighted music as part of their focus: in particular theatrical studies have included musical activity in their scope. One such study is Gordon Williams's *British Theatre in the Great War*, which, while concentrating on the dramatic stage, has investigated musical theatre as well as operatic performances during the war (both static and travelling opera companies are discussed, although Thomas Beecham's work is given pre-eminence).<sup>57</sup> Williams's observations on theatrical endeavour in this period, bookended as it is by music (musical comedy in the first chapter, and opera in the last) argues for the significance and relevance of musical productions to the development of the British theatre stage as a whole. Another theatrical study which concentrates on music, in this case the music of the concert parties that visited the troops both overseas and at home, is L. J. Collins *Theatre at War 1914-18*.<sup>58</sup> Covering all manner and style of musical entertainment under the heading of theatre, Collins investigates in great detail how the theatre provided 'a temporary release from the agonies of the war.'<sup>59</sup> In his chapters on military and civilian concert parties, Collins occasionally confuses the two, as, for example, in his citing of Sassoon's poem *Concert Party*, a poem inspired by a visit from a Lena Ashwell concert party (a civilian troupe) but which Collins applies to military concert parties.<sup>60</sup> The work is a very valuable study, which shows the intersection of music and theatrical life and highlights the role music played on stages during the war. Collins also draws attention to the ways in which the entertainment profession (both theatrical and musical) was heavily involved in charitable enterprise during the war.

A more recent study which also includes musical activity during the war is Jeffrey S Reznick's *Healing the Nation*.<sup>61</sup> This invaluable volume, concentrating on the 'culture of caregiving' during the First World War, interprets such culture broadly. He investigates rehabilitative work, recreational huts for troops overseas and life in hospitals for wounded and convalescent soldiers at home. Reznick's work gives

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<sup>57</sup> Williams, *British Theatre in the Great War*.

<sup>58</sup> Collins, *Theatre at War*.

<sup>59</sup> Collins, *Theatre at War*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> See Materiality 9 for an illustration of both Ashwell's concert party and the poem.

<sup>61</sup> Jeffrey Reznick, *Healing the Nation: Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain during the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

concentrated attention to the types of entertainment that formed an essential part of this culture of caregiving, and the ways in which both amateur and professional musicians took part in it. In particular, he highlights the connection between perceived notions of masculinity and health, and how the 'culture of caregiving' (including music and other forms of cultural entertainment) was a part of the way that society came to terms 'with unprecedented loss.'<sup>62</sup>

Biographies of figures involved in the war years are another way in which the culture of this period has received diligent scholarly attention. Margaret Leask's *Lena Ashwell: Actress, Patriot, Pioneer* examines a significant figure in the provision of music for the troops who appears in detail in chapter five of this thesis. Leask gives a great deal of attention both to the types of music Ashwell facilitated and to the key attitudes regarding both musical genres and the function of music in wartime.<sup>63</sup> Leask succeeds in depicting Ashwell's busy and complex life in the theatre, and has amassed a wealth of useful information in relation to the years of the First World War, when she emerged as a strong and capable leader, not only of practical charitable enterprises designed to provide employment and assistance to those in need, but as one of the first to realise the importance of providing entertainment for troops.

Of studies of individual composers who were active during the war years, perhaps the most useful and detailed is Lewis Foreman's edited volume, *Oh, My Horses! Elgar and the Great War*.<sup>64</sup> Although solely concentrating on a single composer, this is an invaluable volume, not only for the breadth of its archival material, but for the welcome variety of perspectives on the war years generally, as well as on Elgar specifically. Foreman's chapter 'The Winnowing-Fan: British Music in Wartime,'<sup>65</sup> is a very useful general survey of British musical activity 1914-1918. In its wide-ranging mixture of archival material and its broad overview, this is an invaluable introduction to the field. Other chapters in this volume touch on issues of importance, for example the question of German influence on British music, the rupture between Germany and Britain, and the connection with both nationalism and imperialism called into

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<sup>62</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Margaret Leask, *Lena Ashwell: Actress, Patriot, Pioneer* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2012).

<sup>64</sup> Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses!*

<sup>65</sup> Foreman, 'The Winnowing-Fan: British Music in Wartime,' in Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses!*, 89-131.

relief by the war.<sup>66</sup> In addition, this volume has two invaluable resources for piecing together a broader picture of Britain at war than a limited focus on Elgar would imply: extracts from Alice Elgar's diary and a chronology of wartime events compiled by Martin Bird.<sup>67</sup> Bird's chronology is somewhat lax in its attribution of material and can lead to a frustrating quest for the source of its material, but it nonetheless gives a valuable overview of wartime events and attitudes.

Studies of the culture of the long nineteenth century often contain material relevant to any study of the war. One such study particularly germane to my thesis here is that of Alan Bartley referred to above, *Far From the Fashionable Crowd*. Bartley investigates the work of the People's Concert Society and other similar organisations, which provided low-cost concerts to working-class audiences, based in London's East End. He concludes that such endeavours were not motivated by any wish to pacify or control a potentially powerful and rebellious lower order, although he does not deny that a belief in 'music as a force for moral and social regeneration'<sup>68</sup> was a believable factor in motivating those who arranged and took part in such concerts. He concludes that most such efforts were motivated by 'genuine altruism.'<sup>69</sup> This ties in with my findings about the motivations of some of the commentators on and practitioners of art music during the war, as I will examine below.

Several recent doctoral theses have covered the high culture of the war years, each concentrating on particular aspects. Some include the war years as part of a broader chronological sweep focusing on a particular cultural subject, and some (though few) have focused on the war in particular. Rachel Moore's thesis, *Performing Propaganda: Musical Life and Culture in Paris, 1914-1918*,<sup>70</sup> is a welcome example of the detailed attention scholars are now giving specifically to the war years themselves. Moore's work highlights the use of music as a propaganda tool, discussing how music's reintroduction to daily life was designed to reassure a troubled population. She also concludes that the dissemination of French music overseas conveyed an image of

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<sup>66</sup> Jeremy Dibble, 'The Death of a Culture: Germany and British Music before 1914,' in Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses!*, 73-87; Bernard Porter, 'Elgar, and Empire: music, nationalism and the war,' in *ibid.*, 133-173.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Neill, 'Elgar's War: from the Diaries of Lady Elgar, 1914-1918,' and Bird, 'Chronology,' in Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses!*, 3-69 and 388-456.

<sup>68</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Rachel Moore, *Performing Propaganda: Musical Life and Culture in Paris, 1914-1918*, PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012.



France as a community builder and as a tenacious country unlikely to submit to German aggression. Her work reveals how music's uses in these ways created certain ideological and practical difficulties. Britain's lack of formal use of music for propaganda, in contrast to other art forms (of which more below) means that this study is a useful basis for comparison between two allied nations and their musical lives.

Doctoral research with a broader chronological remit than the war but which includes the war years, has concentrated on various cultural and some specifically musical issues, and many studies give invaluable attention to musical life and activity and attitudes during the war. For example, Gareth Thomas's study of the reception and influence of Russian music in Britain between 1893 and 1929 includes important reflections on the impact of Russian music during the war years, a key time for Russian music when German music was understandably often treated with caution, as will be seen below.<sup>71</sup> Because of his chronological remit, Thomas also gives valuable insights into public attitudes to new (or at least, new to Britain) Russian music in the pre- and post-war periods. In particular, he notes the widespread pre-war tendency to apocalyptic ideas, a desire among some to sweep away the old and facilitate a violent onrush of the new, as found in for example in Scriabin's remark: 'The masses need to be shaken [...] In this way they can be rendered perceptive of finer vibrations than usual. How deeply mistaken it is to view war merely as discord between nations.'<sup>72</sup> This topic of war as a cleansing notion is examined below.

Steven Martin's study *The British 'Operatic Machine': Investigations into the institutional history of English opera, c. 1875–1939*,<sup>73</sup> is a rich and varied resource for any with an interest in opera in this period, investigating as it does attempts to found a British national opera. It depicts the wide variety of operatic endeavour in Britain, not merely that of Thomas Beecham, who has often received the lion's share of attention, but reveals that many other companies were active during the war period. His research into the success of the operatic endeavours at the Old Vic under Lilian Baylis in the war years, for example, adds weight to the discourse around opera and the opportunities that the war provided that I investigate in this study.

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<sup>71</sup> Gareth Thomas, *The Impact of Russian Music in England 1893–1929*, PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2005.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Hugh Macdonald, *Scriabin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 10.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Martin, *The British 'Operatic Machine': Investigations into the Institutional History of English Opera, c. 1875–1939*, PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2010.

Although concentrating on the immediate post-war period, Megan Pricor's work on Percy Scholes and the music appreciation movement<sup>74</sup> is another study which is grounded in detailed attention to the musical life of Britain in this period. Pricor demonstrates how Scholes's post-war work grew in part out of lectures he gave to troops in 1916, on behalf of the YMCA.<sup>75</sup> She takes E. M. Forster's character from *Howard's End*, Leonard Bast, as emblematic of those seeking to acquire cultural capital – an attempt to 'catch the world,' as Forster puts it – by reading, attendance at concerts and visiting art galleries. Her study highlights some of the essential elements of Bourdieusian theory.

A key work with regard to this element of self-improvement that Pricor highlights, although not again concentrating directly on the war, is Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British working classes*.<sup>76</sup> A masterly and revealing study, Rose's work depicts a rich and idiosyncratic mix of elements in those members of the working class who sought to acquire learning, and finds that the study of the classics was unambiguously emancipatory.<sup>77</sup> In particular, his determination that one must cease to think of high and low culture as mutually exclusive is particularly germane. He describes 'a promiscuous mix of high and low' as 'a common pattern among working-class readers of all regions, generations, and economic strata. Their approach to literature was a random walk.'<sup>78</sup> He too focuses on Leonard Bast of Forster's novel, in his investigation of why the middlebrow became such anathema to the thinking classes: 'One cannot help but think that the impoverishment and death of Leonard Bast represent wish fulfilment on the author's part, disposing of yet another aspiring middlebrow. The unpleasant reality was the clerk belonged to a rising and increasingly articulate class.'<sup>79</sup> Rose's challenge to concepts of high and low culture has resonances for this thesis which are examined below.

Recent scholarship has shown an increase in the breadth and depth of specific and individual studies of aspects of the culture of the First World War, with a great deal

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<sup>74</sup> Megan Pricor, 'To Catch the World': Percy Scholes and the English Musical Appreciation Movement 1918–1939,' *Context: Journal of Music Research* 15/16, 1998, 61–71.

<sup>75</sup> Pricor, 'To Catch the World,' 63.

<sup>76</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010.)

<sup>77</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, 386.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, 371.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 434.

of essential and almost forensic attention being paid to works or composers of this period, or individuals involved in music making. An early example is Claire Hirshfield's 'Musical Performance in Wartime: 1914-1918.'<sup>80</sup> She highlights the disarray that the musical profession found itself in on the outbreak of war, and how a 'small window of opportunity' opened to provide employment. Motivated by the dawning recognition that large numbers of initially under-occupied men in camps could benefit from organised entertainment, various schemes grew up and Hirshfield's article provides a useful overview of three of the principal schemes from archival evidence. I examine such schemes in chapter six below.

A major monograph which draws into one several strands of musical life during the First World War, including a welcome focus on several combatant countries at once, is Glenn Watkins' *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War*. This is an ambitious work which not only attempts to place music in the context of the war and assess its significance, but which covers individual countries in varying degrees of detail. Watkins' stated aim is to examine 'responses by the allies to the perceived threat of German hegemony in matters of intellectual and artistic accomplishment.'<sup>81</sup> Great Britain is allocated three chapters out of twenty-three.<sup>82</sup> In keeping with his focus on responses to Germany's cultural domination, he explains British wartime musical attitudes by reference to the past, if all too briefly. The wide variety of attitudes expressed during this time is thus unfortunately telescoped, and although Watkins' larger cultural view brings in poetry, as well as works composed during the war although unknown until much later (e.g., Havergal Brian's *The Tigers*),<sup>83</sup> this means it sometimes lacks a nuanced understanding of the variety of attitudes in the musical world at the time. He makes the not uncommon mistake of assuming a connection, too, between anti-German, paranoid nationalist attitudes to music and Oskar Schmitz's *Das Land ohne Musik*, published in Munich in 1914.<sup>84</sup> I have come across no evidence that this work was known in Britain during the First World War, its first apparent publication into English being in 1926 (hence its absence from

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<sup>80</sup> Claire Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime: 1914-1918,' *Music Review* 53/4, 1992, 291-304.

<sup>81</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>82</sup> France is given six chapters, Italy one, Germany-Austria two, and the United States of America six, and four later chapters are dedicated to music post-Armistice.

<sup>83</sup> Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 48. Brian's opera was not premièred until 1983.

<sup>84</sup> Oskar A. H. Schmitz, *Das Land ohne Musik: Englische Gesellschaftsprobleme* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1914).

consideration in this study), although it was widely referred to during the Second World War.<sup>85</sup>

Watkins is aware that his volume cannot claim to be a comprehensive survey of a war which, he says, had ‘numerous facades’:

The present study of the music produced during this period of crisis must be read, therefore, as an anthology of somewhat arbitrary, if also central, test cases that are obliged to stand for a host of equally compelling stories. [...] The aim throughout is to present history [...] as resonating interdisciplinary collage.<sup>86</sup>

It is in these broader overviews, this ‘collage,’ that Watkins best succeeds: he has a breadth of vision of the wider field which provides a satisfying nexus of connections between the various combatants, across the war and its aftermath as a whole, and which both highlights and dissolves some of the arbitrary divisions placed on the war. His skill in linking the various countries he considers together, to draw a wider, pan-national picture of European currents, makes the book an invaluable introduction to the period, but the approach of using only selected highlights to stand for the whole leaves a partial picture, at least of British wartime musical life. It is futile to bemoan the lack of attention paid to Great Britain when the author himself has pointed out that the book’s broad remit entailed the necessity of leaving out so many ‘compelling stories,’ but it highlights the fact that still more scholarly attention to British music in this era would be welcome.

More recently, there has been a welcome increase of focus and concentration on the significance and context of the objects of study. Among these are two by Rachel Cowgill. Her study of Elgar’s *The Spirit of England*, opus 80 (perhaps the most significant wartime musical composition), gives not only a welcome in-depth analysis of the work and situates its content within Elgar’s own religious worldview, but is a detailed and welcome account of the musical world within Britain at the time of its composition. This will be referred to in more detail below. Cowgill has also, like Jay Winter (see below), paid close attention to the immediate post-war period and gives a useful overview not only of musical responses to Armistice celebrations but of the general emotional impact of the war on the bereaved and on the nation generally, in

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<sup>85</sup> Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 42-3. See Jürgen Schaarwächter, ‘Chasing a Myth and a Legend: “The British Musical Renaissance” in a “Land without Music,”’ *MT*, 149/1904, 2008, 53-60, for details of the uses of Schmitz’s work in the Second World War.

<sup>86</sup> Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 2-3.

her article 'Canonizing remembrance: music for Armistice Day at the BBC, 1922–7'.<sup>87</sup> This article appeared in a special issue of *First World War Studies* devoted to music and the war, which was a welcome foregrounding of scholarly attention to music in this period. Other articles in this issue include the musical life of prisoners of war in Germany in Lewis Foreman's study of Ruhleben<sup>88</sup> and a study of Edward Dent's influence during the war by Karen Arrandale.<sup>89</sup> Arrandale's article, soon to be expanded into a welcome biography of Dent, highlights one man's attempt to maintain contact, sanity and purpose amongst his friends and pupils caught up in the war.

Lastly, Jay Winter's wide-ranging and invaluable work in the study of the First World War must of course be recognised here. A useful overview of popular culture during the war is given in his chapter 'Popular Culture in wartime Britain'.<sup>90</sup> Although his recent edited work with Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War*,<sup>91</sup> did not concentrate on high culture, this extensive two-volume opus is a welcome contribution to all aspects of the war's cultural history. Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*<sup>92</sup> is an investigation of the power of traditional forms of mourning. He challenges orthodox ways of understanding both modernism and the impact of the First World War on modernism. His work is an essential contribution to recent scholarship on the war, which aims to see a rounded view of the many different co-existing realities of the time. As Winter puts it, earlier attempts to explain the history of the early twentieth century, and to depict as linear the development of different trends in cultural history, do not take into account the past's 'messiness, its non-linearity, its vigorous and stubbornly visible incompatibilities'.<sup>93</sup> Winter has criticised cultural historians for falling into two problems: firstly, a kind of scattered eclecticism, using 'instances [...] chosen at random to indicate features of cultural life, without any attempt to establish significance or affinities. Secondly, a too narrow

<sup>87</sup> Rachel Cowgill, 'Canonizing Remembrance: Music for Armistice Day at the BBC, 1922–7,' *First World War Studies* 2/1, 2011, 75-107.

<sup>88</sup> Lewis Foreman, 'In Ruhleben Camp,' *First World War Studies* 2/1, 2011, 27-40.

<sup>89</sup> Karen Arrandale, 'Artists' Rifles and Artistic Licence: Edward Dent's War,' *First World War Studies* 2/1, 2011, 7-16.

<sup>90</sup> Jay Winter, 'Popular Culture in Wartime Britain,' in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stiles ed., *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 330-348.

<sup>91</sup> Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert ed., *Capital Cities at War* and Winter and Robert ed., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919 Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>92</sup> Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>93</sup> Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 5.

focus on canonical texts, works of “high culture.”<sup>94</sup> My study here focuses on one small corner of the war period, from the point of view of one country – and Winter’s work is laudable for its wish to break out of narrow nationalist viewpoints on the war – and thus tries to address Winter’s concerns. Its narrow remit on the musical commentary of the day aims to draw together related material, to establish both the significance of the discourse in question and to relate it to its context and to subsequent theories. In addition, this attempt to provide a rounded depiction of the participants will demonstrate that, in the period of the First World War, even those most deeply committed to the narrow pursuit of ‘high culture,’ the commentators on and practitioners of ‘art music,’ became more willing to allow for different interpretations of and access to a culture hitherto closely guarded, a concept I expand below.

This project then aims to situate itself squarely alongside this recent growth in interest and attention to the culture of Britain in the first decades of the twentieth century, and in particular alongside the welcome increase in specialist attention paid to the war years themselves. These studies, of larger and smaller scale, are contributing to a far wider and more nuanced understanding of this field than was the case only a few decades ago. My choice of the public discourse as a forum for identifying trends and bringing to life one particular aspect of the world of art music at this period should serve as a generalist study which links together some of the broader ideas and concepts surrounding music at this time. In turn, it should bring these individual studies into relief, and will contribute to our understanding of the multi-faceted nature of musical activity at this time.

## 1.4 Overview and Outline

The discourse around art music during the war was so strong, vibrant and varied that, in a project of this limited scope, it is impossible to give a comprehensive survey of the issues raised and discussed. I concentrate on five major themes, broad accumulations of shared ideas and comments that were commonly discussed in the music press and which illuminate the field.

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<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, 10.

The first of these is the inevitable impact of the war on ideas relating to German music, and Britain's musical relationship with Germany. Early in the war, there was widespread discussion of whether or not it was legitimate to claim that the true nature of music was international, or supranational. Music, many argued, knew no frontiers, literal or metaphorical; it had no country. It might even, some suggested, be able to transcend warfare. There were many such lofty claims made for music during the war – and many counter claims that music needed to represent the nation. In its examination of the musical press, this study foregrounds the variety of such attitudes. The discussion over whether music could (or should) transcend national boundaries also created debate about whether or not a boycott on performing enemy composers was necessary. These matters form the basis of Chapter Two, along with the difficulties that musicians experienced as they struggled to reposition themselves in regard to Germany, erstwhile musical friend (and rival) now transformed into political foe.

It was, naturally enough, common for writers in musical journals to ponder the effect that the war would have on music generally. War in continental Europe for the first time in decades prompted debates about whether or not musical composition or activity was stimulated by warfare. Such comment was also fuelled by the wish to anchor music historically, at a time of instability: to forge links with the past, chart progress, and look to the future. A major preoccupation of all music writers was inevitably then, in the early days of the war, the simple question, 'What will happen to music?' Certain journals explicitly invited musical figures to comment on the effect of the war on music, as we will see, and such debates continued for the war's duration. One of the most significant strands of this debate was the question of how British music would respond to the war. Although immediate reactions to the war were varied, there emerges early on in most commentary, even amongst those who held that war was the 'negation of music,' as Lancelot of the *Referee* put it,<sup>95</sup> a consensus that the unusual conditions and enforced break from normal habits might be a force for good in British music. Chapter Three concentrates on this broad notion of the war as positive opportunity for British music and musicians, in various ways. As well as discussions of chances for a British 'school' of music, there was also much debate over the promotion of British executant artists, and the place in British musical life of foreign musicians. In this context I also discuss the possibility that the

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<sup>95</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: The War Song at Liège,' *Ref*, 9/8/1914, 5.

war was seized by commentators as an opportunity to promote their own agendas in the face of threats of various sorts. Although Fox has claimed that the war caused the marginalisation of all art, and particularly the visual arts, as inimical to Britishness – ‘In every case, art was formulated as a binary opposite to what was acceptable, what was valuable, what was commendable and what in the end was British’ –<sup>96</sup> music stands out as a separate and distinct case, where its very Britishness was, for some – though by no means all – a potential force for good.

The third major area on which I focus is the debate about the rôle and function of music itself. Wartime stimulated a discussion about the very fabric of musical life. A great deal of thought and discussion was dedicated in the early days of the war to whether or not music – going to hear it, performing it, studying it – could be justified at a time of national crisis. From the war’s beginning, commentators on art music argued strongly for continued investment of time and money in music. Much of the commentary related to the potential music had for good: the war saw a great debate about the practical role of music contributing to national well being at a time of strain and conflict. Its use as an emotional and psychological support, a solace in times of trouble, and a practical aid to morale was widely discussed. This combination of practical and imaginative, quasi-spiritual uses for music forms the basis of Chapter Four. In a very real sense, the war forced the world of art music to make a claim for itself as significant to more than just a tiny majority of the population.

In Chapter Five, I investigate one of the natural outcomes of this newly articulated belief that music could play a vital role in the life of the nation at a time of war, and that is the position of music with regard to the military. Armed conflict was in the experience of very few people in 1914; the regular army which existed at the outbreak of war was soon vastly increased with volunteers. These men needed accommodation, training and, as many musical and theatrical commentators came to realise, entertainment. The army was unprepared for the vast and sudden increase in numbers and trainees were housed in makeshift centres, occasionally equipped with dummy rifles.<sup>97</sup> Music, initially neglected by the authorities who had more pressing

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<sup>96</sup> James Fox, “‘Fiddling While Rome is Burning’: Hostility to Art During the First World War, 1914–18,” *Visual Culture in Britain*, 11/1, 2010, 60.

<sup>97</sup> Gary Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory: The First World War, Myths and Realities* (London: Review, 2002), 52–3. ‘The vast influx of men swamped existing facilities, and in the autumn and winter of 1914–15 many men of “Kitchener’s Army” were billeted in private homes or in makeshift camps [...] they lacked uniforms and drilled with wooden rifles.’



concerns, came gradually to be recognised as having an important role to play for serving men.

Whilst this study does not investigate the actual performance of music overseas, it does enquire into the provision of music for soldiers as discussed in the musical press in Britain. The two worlds – ‘over there’ and ‘over here’ – were not completely separate the one from the other, as we saw above. The well being of fighting men was a primary concern of many at home, beyond their immediate families. Musicians were no strangers to this debate, and in Chapter Five I investigate both debates about music for the military and the experience of many musicians who were involved in it. Notions of cultural capital come to the fore here, in discussion about providing access to ‘good’ music, in frequent mention of taste, and in moments where cultures and classes met in more or less harmonious ways. Public commentary (both specialist musical and non-musical publications) often stressed the importance of entertainment for the armed forces including music, both at home – in training camps, or in public entertainments – as well as at the front. Those concert parties which went out to the front from an art music background were widely discussed in the musical press, and the value and type of the music they provided was an important topic. In this context, many details of life at the front and in the various supply and recuperation bases overseas, were revealed to readers in Britain, and widely discussed.

The last major area I investigate is the interconnection of music with charitable enterprises, the topic of Chapter Six. The immediate cancellation of many musical activities on the outbreak of war, a topic well covered in Lewis Foreman’s ‘The Winnowing Fan,’<sup>98</sup> had a huge impact on many musicians, especially initially. Central to this part of the study is the vexed question of the giving of musical services for charitable ends. This was a topic that was in the forefront of much commentary on music throughout the war. An enthusiastic response to a variety of war needs from the public meant that musicians were being asked to give their services for a seemingly endless stream of good causes, whilst at the same time many of them had lost their own incomes. Although musical life gradually resumed a surprisingly busy schedule, there were many musicians who remained under- or un-employed. The war saw the establishment of musical schemes expressly designed to alleviate the lot of

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<sup>98</sup> Foreman, ‘Winnowing Fan,’ 89-92; Foreman’s chapter has an excellent brief summary of initial reactions to the war among musicians.

musicians negatively affected by the war. Many of these schemes combined paid employment for musicians with providing charitable assistance, entertainment to the wounded, or other public services, and the second part of Chapter Six investigates in detail two such schemes.

As the Armistice was signed, many expressed hopes that wartime developments in the musical sphere would become permanent. In the concluding chapter, I will suggest that the perceived progress in British musical life that had been widely discussed during the war remained central in the public discussion of music and its role, even several months after the war, gradually diminishing after the first months of 1919. Whether or not there were lasting changes or effects are questions I will briefly touch upon, suggesting worthwhile avenues for further investigation. I discuss the war's effect on attitudes to boundaries between different types of or context for music. I conclude that the war gave musical commentators the chance to claim for their art a central role, with some justification, and that it is possible to argue that art music had not had before and has not had since such a relative unity of support and high public profile.

To sum up then, this project examines the public discourse surrounding art music in Britain during the years of the First World War. It uses as its foundation contemporary commentary relating to music in both national newspapers and specialist music journals. It traces the development of this public discourse throughout the war, and examines various differences that can be identified within it, including streams of disagreement about such things as charitable uses of music, the type of music that should be used for serving armed forces, and the content of concert programmes. In contrast to the prevailing view of the war years as something of a desert with regard to worthwhile musical contribution or activity, such an examination reveals a picture of a vibrant, discursive, sometimes contentious musical life during the war, which stakes out a claim for the relevance and direct practical use of art music in such times.

The war years are an extraordinary juxtaposition of noise and silence, of movement and stasis, of calm and massacre, and of headlong pursuit and cultural stasis, writ both large and small: in the contrast of the famous battles with the months of boredom or inactivity at the various fronts, and the high and low points of activity on

the home front. The very insanity of the war is shown in its attempt to solve political and diplomatic crises by the profligate consumption of the lives of men, munitions and money. At the same time as this extraordinary consumption it was also a time of pause and rethinking: it stopped the normal unfolding and development of everyday life. And whether or not the resumption of that life post-war involved derailment or deviation, delay or progress, there is value in studying the years themselves. From a cultural viewpoint, such a study reveals that the war may be seen as a laboratory. The very conditions created by the war – its suddenness, its derailing qualities, the necessity it imposed of justifying any and every activity, against a backdrop of violent warfare – provide an opportunity for investigation. This thesis has at its heart a wish to approach what Jane Fulcher has described as one of the goals of cultural history, that is: to grasp ‘meaning, understanding, and experience’ and to learn ‘how such experience is constructed and communicated through cultural objects and cultural practice.’<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Jane Fulcher, ‘Introduction: Defining the New Cultural History of Music, Its Origins, Methodologies, and Lines of Inquiry,’ in *The Oxford Handbook to the New Cultural History of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

## Materiality 2 *King Albert's Book* (1): rationale

*King Albert's Book* showed that 'an anthology of works by illustrious composers, artists, literary figures, and statesmen could be an ideal method not only of raising funds for a variety of war relief efforts but of enlivening a sense of Allied solidarity.'<sup>100</sup> Although the book's sales benefited the *Daily Telegraph* Belgian Fund, its aim was far more than pecuniary: it was a focus of feeling and an outlet for hero worship, much needed at a time of confusion, disorientation, and fear. Its editor sought contributions from international public and political figures, and ended by including 238 contributions. Its subtitle, 'A Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women Throughout the World,' aims to equate condemnation of Germany's treatment of Belgium with all right-thinking people. Indeed, the book reveals that even those who had serious doubts about the war, or who did not believe that it had meaning, such as Romain Rolland, were prepared to put into writing their appreciation of 'gallant little Belgium's' heroism and valour. Sophie de Schaepdrijver has noted that the massacres were Belgium's first '*cause célèbre*', and that Rolland recognised idealism in Belgium's resistance to Germany, hailing 'the heroism of this nation which has uncomplainingly sacrificed itself in order to save its honour.'<sup>101</sup>

It may be supposed, since the book was a *Telegraph* publication, that it was politically conservative. However, it aimed to show unified support for the Belgian cause, whatever the contributors' politics or beliefs about the war. Hall Caine, the book's editor, was in his youth a communist, later a Christian socialist; the varied list of contributors shows a remarkable diversity of opinions and interests.<sup>102</sup> In a world confused by war, to be able to support an innocent non-aggressor was a way of demonstrating support for one's fellow human beings, without necessarily making any statement for or against militarism.

Caine sought contributors from a variety of countries, religions and occupations. The Aga Khan represented the Muslim world (14), assuring King Albert that 'the Moslems of the British Empire fall behind no other nation in their profound and sincere sympathy with them in the countless sorrows and sacrifices which constitute the imperishable glory of Belgium.' The Chief Rabbi of the British Empire represented Judaism (70). Norman Angell, widely thought to be anti-war, also contributed: 'Belgium has done this great service for all of us: she has shown how great a little country may be and how little a great one may become. She has shown that the real nobility of patriotism is not a matter of wide territory and political power, and does not need to be nourished by these things; while the action of Germany towards Belgium has shown that power and size may well destroy all that makes patriotism worth while' (48).

Caine hoped the book would be of 'international interest', a 'moral inspiration to posterity' and a representative of 'a great new spirit of brotherhood.' Its underlying principle was to promote 'a love of justice and a 'hatred of oppression,' contributors effectively signing a 'Covenant [...] on the desecrated altar of a little nation's liberty.'<sup>103</sup> The heroism of the Belgian nation was encapsulated in the heroism of its King Albert, a personage all the more powerful in contrast to his predecessor, Leopold II, considered in Europe to be a tyrant in Africa and of dissolute morals.<sup>104</sup> These contrasts were an essential part both of the heroic lens through which Belgium was viewed, and of the book itself: that between Albert and his predecessor, though unstated, would have been common knowledge; that between 'little' Belgium and the large and mighty Germany was often stressed.

Some of the contributions stress common humanity; others are downright bellicose, even recommending arming every British citizen and using 'intelligent artificial selection', to furnish the Empire with 'healthy, vigorous manhood and womanhood'.<sup>105</sup> There are highly sentimental stories sitting alongside anti-German diatribes. Most are short tributes to Belgian heroism. Arnold Bennett recounted his first visit to Belgium, when he discovered that all Belgium was 'a museum of architecture, art, and history'.<sup>106</sup> Such a reassessment of Belgium was the common experience of Allied nations in August 1914. Belgium was recast in a heroic light.

All contributors were united in their willingness to offer Belgium public support; the book may thus be seen as a statement of commitment to democracy, despite the varied motives and beliefs of its contributors: the book was a welcome focus in the disorientating and foreboding time of war.

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<sup>100</sup> Glenn Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 103.

<sup>101</sup> Romain Rolland in *King Albert's Book: a Tribute to the Belgian King and People from Representative Men and Women Throughout the World*, ed. Thomas H. H. Caine (London: *Daily Telegraph*, 1914), 107.

<sup>102</sup> Vivien Allen, 'Caine, Sir (Thomas Henry) Hall (1853–1931),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 4/12/2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32237>.

<sup>103</sup> Hall Caine, Introduction, *King Albert's Book*, 6–7.

<sup>104</sup> Jean Stengers, 'L'Entrée en guerre de la Belgique,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 179, 1995, 31.

<sup>105</sup> Sir James Barr, 'Some Eugenic Ideals,' *King Albert's Book*, 177–8.

<sup>106</sup> Joan Littlewood and the Theatre Workshop developed the stage musical (later a film) *O What a Lovely War* in 1963, based on Charles Chilton's BBC radio documentary from 1961, *The Long, Long Trail: Soldiers' Songs of the First World War*.

<sup>107</sup> Arnold Bennett, 'The Return,' *King Albert's Book*, 37–39.

## Chapter Two: What To Do About German music?



Figure 1 A GOOD RIDDANCE. 'The King has done a popular act in abolishing the German titles held by members of His Majesty's family.' *Punch*, 27 June 1917, 411.

In August 1914, Germany and Britain, longstanding political as well as musical friends and allies, musically and politically, were at a stroke transformed into enemies. The sudden change caused musicians difficulties of varying degrees, both emotional and practical. This chapter concentrates on the rhetoric surrounding German music and musicians during the war, and has two main focal points. I examine firstly the broad issue of anti-German feeling among musicians.<sup>1</sup> I provide a brief contextual pre-war background of the Anglo-German musical relationship, before investigating both the public discussion provoked by the thorny questions of the relationship of British music to German, and how attitudes developed during the war. Secondly I examine the range of published attitudes towards the performance of German music in England. Under this heading, I will challenge the widely repeated but erroneous claim that there was a formal ban on German music at any stage of the war, temporary or otherwise.

German music remained on concert programmes throughout the war, with occasional formal exceptions, as we will see below. Whilst concert programming *per se* is not the focus of my research, the content of programmes is inevitably referred to obliquely in the commentary that I discuss. The suitability of musical choices is involved when the question of wartime music generally is discussed, and specifically when the matter of music for soldiers and what that should entail is under scrutiny. Debates were common about the suitability for soldiers of concerts of exclusively ‘serious’ music for example, that is, concerts without any leavening of lighter music or the use of a humorist, as was common in concerts for soldiers (see chapter five). There is very valuable material available to the scholar of wartime programming and a detailed study concentrating on programming would be welcome. An invaluable resource for programming information is the Concert Programmes Database: it contains, for example, an individual collection of

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<sup>1</sup> A caveat: it does not follow that everyone who was keen to promote British music was necessarily anti-German, or even anti- ‘enemy’, a distinction not always made by people at the time. Conversely, many people held strong anti-German views before the war, and it is important to bear the distinction in mind between such people and those who, like Parry, came very reluctantly to a negative view of Germany. This will be examined later. A helpful source on the degeneration of the political relationship with Germany is Paul M. Kennedy’s *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860–1914* (London and Atlantic Highlands: Ashfield Press, 1980). Kennedy emphasises the gradual decline of political ties. An alternative view, stressing the cultural links between the two countries in the period immediately before the war, is *Wilhelmine Germany and Edwardian Britain: Essays on Cultural Affinity*, ed. Dominik Geppert and Robert Gerwarth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); see also Heather Ellis’s review of Geppert and Gerwarth, in the *English Historical Review* 124/511, 2009, 528–530.

programmes from Birmingham Town Hall in a scrapbook from the war years, which not only give a picture of the sort of programmes performed but the sort of programmes chosen by the particular concert-goer who created the scrapbook. The database also includes a collection of programmes from the Coliseum at the Royal College of Music's Centre for Performance History.<sup>2</sup> In this study programming forms a small, though illustrative part of a wider consideration of the motivation and rhetoric behind certain choices, a study in which the focus is on an examination of the discourse around music and its role, which reveals the debates and preoccupations of the lived experiences of musicians in wartime. As part of the material illustration of the attitudes under scrutiny here, however, I have included in Materiality 4 an illustrative chart of the frequency of certain nationalities of composer as displayed in the Royal College of Music student concerts for the duration of the war.

Before examining the effect of the war on Anglo-German musical relationships, it will be helpful to establish briefly the situation in the years before the war.

## 2.1 The Anglo-German Relationship: Some Background to 1914

War with Germany was both a surprise and a shock to many, in view of the historically close relationship with Britain. France was far more the natural enemy of Britain than Germany, as DeGroot has observed:

Before August 1914, there was considerable admiration for Germany and certainly a greater sense of harmony than was felt towards the 'ally' France, a much more dependable object of hatred.<sup>3</sup>

Britain had long had lively economic, social and cultural links with Germany. Large numbers of Germans lived and worked in Britain, in roles ranging from academia and banking to waiters, clerks, tailors, hairdressers, butchers and bakers.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Concert Programmes,' accessed 24/10/2013, <http://www.concertprogrammes.org.uk/>.

<sup>3</sup> DeGroot, *Blighly*, 12. The Anglo-German relationship is examined in detail in two books: Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism* and Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany: British Academics 1914–1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1991), 21–27. Interestingly, his table on 22 does not include musicians. This is because the number of first-generation Germans registering music as a profession at the time of this census was only 509 (personal communication from Professor Panayi, 10/2/2011); for more statistics

Panayi notes that, from 1861 to 1891, Germans were the largest national grouping in Britain: at the 1911 census, Germans numbered 53,324.<sup>5</sup> There were many high-profile figures of German origin in the musical sphere, for example patrons like Sir Edgar Speyer (banker, philanthropist and ‘munificent supporter of Henry J. Wood’),<sup>6</sup> as well as teachers in conservatoires and universities; and of course, there were numbers of rank-and-file orchestral and band musicians, and notable conductors like Michael Balling, who had succeeded Richter at the Hallé.

Despite these close links with Germany, especially musically and academically, there had nonetheless been tensions in the relationship between the two countries over a number of decades. Negative public feeling towards Germany, already beginning to increase because of the perception of German imperialist aims since the time of the Berlin Conference in 1884-5, was exacerbated by German support for the Boers in the last years of the century. In particular, the publication of a telegram from the Kaiser to Kruger after a British incursion into Transvaal in 1896 had caused widespread dismay. On top of these long-standing political concerns, on a personal level the Kaiser (grandson to Queen Victoria, and first cousin to both King George V and the Tsar of Russia) had ruffled more than a few feathers in the years before the war.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the Agadir crisis of 1912 and the naval race with

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about Germans in the music profession, see P. Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain During the 19th Century, 1815–1914* (Oxford: Berg, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Panayi, *Enemy*, 11. Panayi notes that numbers, inevitably, dropped following the war to a little over 20,000. The book is an excellent resource for understanding how immigrants to Britain of a nationality more regarded in the twentieth century as ‘persecutors rather than persecuted’ (1) suffered greatly. For an understanding of the wider German immigration in the century leading up to the First World War, see Panayi’s *German Immigrants*.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Jacobs, *Henry J. Wood: Maker of the Proms* (London: Methuen, 1994), 147. Speyer was born in New York but educated in Germany; the family businesses had companies in Frankfurt, New York and London, and from 1887 he had been based in London as director of Speyer Brothers. Coming under public pressure from those who emphasised both his German family origins and his American-based brother’s pro-German sympathies, Speyer and his family left Britain in 1915, and although the evidence of deliberate dealing with the enemy was slight, after the war he was stripped of his baronetcy and privy council membership. Theo Barker, ‘Speyer, Sir Edgar, baronet (1862–1932)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 22/1/ 2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36215>.

<sup>7</sup> Germany’s territorial interests had come up against Britain’s during the scramble for Africa, and the Kaiser’s telegram of support for Kruger in 1896 following the Jameson incursion had caused widespread anti-German comment in the press. During the time of the Second Boer War, despite the Kaiser himself visiting England to an apparently warm press welcome, Germany condemned Britain for its actions against the Boers and signed the Navy Bill, causing further deterioration in the Anglo-German relationship. Subsequently, in a 1908 article, the Kaiser was reported as describing the British as ‘mad as March hares,’ and stating that the German people were anti-British. See Terence F. Cole, ‘The *Daily Telegraph* Affair and its Aftermath,’ in *Kaiser Wilhelm II New*



Germany from 1906 had all been causes for concern.<sup>8</sup> This vast area can only be briefly addressed here (there is a wealth of resources that give a fuller picture of the Anglo-German relationship, both before and during the war)<sup>9</sup> but various first-hand accounts of long-standing German hostility towards Britain can be found in the memoirs of musicians who had studied, worked or travelled in Germany in the several years and decades before the war.

Arthur Bliss, training as an officer in 1914, recalled being repeatedly told:

that the Germans were well prepared and trained [...] I can recall a strange hint of this in pre-war days. My elder half-brother had spent a few terms at Heidelberg [...] On returning to England he told my father that at his farewell dinner some students had assured him to his surprise that when they came to London they would see that no harm came to him, or words to that effect. In the light of future events, these parting words took on a sinister implication.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas Beecham had a similar experience. In the summer of 1899, near Bayreuth, he found students and naval officers expressing similar thoughts:

In the friendliest and most amiable fashion they would discuss with me the coming struggle between our two countries without ever entertaining the slightest doubt as to the result [...] it was the mission of Germany to rule over a Europe dominated by Teutonic arms and culture.<sup>11</sup>

Playwright and pageant-maker Louis Parker corroborated the existence of such attitudes. Having studied in childhood in Germany, he returned in the late nineteenth century to hear his ex-schoolfellows 'explain [...] in minute detail how the German army would one day – soon – sack London. This they told us in no hostile spirit, but simply as an inevitable natural phenomenon, like the rising of the sun.'<sup>12</sup> Considerable tension in the relationship between Britain and Germany is thus discoverable even in the small cross-section of memoirs under consideration here. Historian Dan Todman confirms that there was a 'militaristic attitude [...] that gave primacy to the use of force [which] permeated much of pre-war German

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*Interpretations: The Corfu Papers*, ed. John C. G. Röhl and Nicolaus Sombart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 249-268.

<sup>8</sup> See Kenneth L. Moll, 'Politics, Power, and Panic: Britain's 1909 Dreadnought "Gap,"' *Military Affairs* 29/3, 1965, 133-144.

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Panayi, *German Immigrants*; Kennedy, *Anglo-German Antagonism*.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Bliss, *As I Remember* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Beecham, *A Mingle of Chime* (London: Arrow Books, 1961), 51-2.

<sup>12</sup> Louis N. Parker, *Several of My Lives* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1928), 87. Parker dates this German attitude from the German victory at Sedan, in the Franco-Prussian war.

society.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, tensions appeared to have calmed somewhat by 1912.<sup>14</sup> There was widespread support for Norman Angell's treatise, *The Great Illusion*.<sup>15</sup> People believed that Angell had proved the impossibility of warfare between modern, advanced nations (on economic grounds, if no other) and the war, when it came, seemed to have come from a cloudless sky. One of the many immediate casualties was Britain's musical relationship with Germany. In order to understand what happened to British musicians' ideas of German music during the war, it is useful to highlight pre-war attitudes relating specifically to musical nationalism in Britain.

## 2.2 Musical Nationalism Before the War

German musicians had been living and working in Britain for centuries. Similarly, a German musical education was, right up to the early twentieth century, almost *de rigueur* for British students: from Sterndale Bennett, Stanford, Mackenzie and Corder to the 'Frankfurt Group' of O'Neill, Roger Quilter, Balfour Gardiner, and Cyril Scott, study in Germany had been seen as essential.<sup>16</sup> It was 'the fashion to regard Germany as the only country that could give a hall-marked education in music.'<sup>17</sup> More than mere fashion, Germany was a world-leader in orchestral music and, as Howes noted, it was 'easy enough to see that Germany was the best and

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<sup>13</sup> Todman, *Great War*, 124.

<sup>14</sup> DeGroot, *Blighty*, 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> For an examination of Angell's propositions, their appeal and the criticism they garnered, see Howard Weinroth, 'Norman Angell and the Great Illusion: An Episode in Pre-1914 Pacifism,' *Historical Journal*, 17/3, 1974, 551-574. Weinroth thinks the widespread belief that hostilities would be over by Christmas 1914 was due in part to the fact that the peace movement was 'psychologically disarmed' by Angell's trust in the 'growing sanity' of humanity. Weinroth, 'Norman Angell,' 574. Angell's *The Great Illusion: The Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (London: Heinemann, 1909) was and is often misconstrued as stating war was impossible: Angell in fact argued that war would be financially ruinous because of economic interdependence in the modern world. See Torbjorn Knutsen, 'Cowboy Philosophy? A Centenary Appreciation of Norman Angell's Great Illusion,' British International Studies Association 2009 Annual Conference, accessed 14/2/2011, <http://www.bisa.ac.uk/>. Angell's Nobel acceptance speech from 1933 and a helpful summary of the main argument of his book is at the Nobel foundation's website, accessed 15/2/2011, [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1933/press.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1933/press.html).

<sup>16</sup> The importance of a German musical education can be seen in the extraordinary fact that while Stanford was organist of Trinity College Cambridge in 1873, he also studied in Germany each year, spending six months of 1874, 1875 and 1876 in Leipzig and Berlin. Harry Plunket Greene, *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London: Edward Arnold, 1935), 46 and 52. Sullivan, the first recipient of the Mendelssohn scholarship, had used a prolongation of the scholarship to spend two years studying in Leipzig, and many others followed. The 'Frankfurt Group' studied, not all concurrently, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with Iwan Knorr at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt.

<sup>17</sup> Basil Maine, *Elgar, His Life and Works, Vol. I, The Life* (London: Bell, 1933), 39.

most natural model to copy.’<sup>18</sup>

From about 1880, British musical education, composition and performance were experiencing growth, which Arnold Whittall has termed a ‘new maturity.’<sup>19</sup> An element of these developments was a wish to gain independence from all things foreign (generally) and German (specifically) well before 1914. Increased confidence was undeniable, although music journals continued to cite as evidence of the validity of British music its performance in Germany. As Dibble has said, ‘Since the very edifice of British music was predicated on German values and measured against German standards, it was also an essential part of the equation that ultimate success for a British composer was to gain recognition [...] chiefly in Germany from his German peers.’<sup>20</sup> British musicians were keen for their country to be recognised in greater Europe as a real musical force, not merely a destination for foreign musicians. However, in the early twentieth century, an uncomfortable tension developed between a growing wish for English musical independence from German domination, and the recognition of the debt British music owed to Germany. For example, music journals trumpeted the advance of British music whilst regretting its domination by foreigners.<sup>21</sup>

Such tensions began to be expressed in various ways. Richard Strauss, the leading figure of contemporary German music in the years before the war, received a mixed reaction from critical commentators, despite his enormous popular success. Vaughan Williams thought Strauss ‘a cook who can serve up mutton with such art that he does not always take the trouble to look out for venison.’<sup>22</sup> Stanford, although appreciative of German assistance to British music and in no doubt about the debt that art music owed to Germany, had become disillusioned with modern

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<sup>18</sup> Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), 40.

<sup>19</sup> Arnold Whittall, ‘British Music in the Modern World,’ in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, Vol. 6, The Twentieth Century*, ed. Stephen Banfield (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 12.

<sup>20</sup> Dibble, ‘Death of a Culture,’ 82.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in the search for a replacement for Richter, the *MT* noted, ‘We may be allowed to express the hope that it will be found possible to secure the services of a competent native conductor. When Dr Richter was appointed there were few if any British conductors who could aspire to such an exalted position. But now surely, to our great pride, we have amongst us men who have proved their ability in the highest departments of the conductor’s art.’ ‘Occasional Notes,’ *MT*, 1/4/1910, 225.

<sup>22</sup> Vaughan Williams, ‘Ein Heldenleben,’ (1903) in *Vaughan Williams on Music*, ed. D. Manning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 159.

German music for several years before the war, targeting Strauss in particular.<sup>23</sup> Despite training in Germany, and the success of many of his operas there, Stanford's criticism of German music was increasingly outspoken:

The tendency of modern Germany has been in the direction of this dangerous system of instrumentation, dangerous because it induces monotony. Modern England has, from old and deep-seated admiration of her Teuton cousins, been showing signs of following in the same path. [...] It is not at all improbable that poverty of invention (which cannot be remedied) is often purposely cloaked by richness of colouring (which can be acquired).<sup>24</sup>

Stanford's disillusion with modernist developments in general (Kevin O'Connell has noted that Stanford was, for example, 'suspicious of musical developments in France')<sup>25</sup> and German music in particular is discussed by O'Connell in 'Stanford and the Gods of Modern Music'; he notes that Stanford was distressed at trends in composition, which he found as much ethically as aesthetically distasteful.<sup>26</sup> In particular, O'Connell holds that Stanford objected to the increasing primacy of colour over line.<sup>27</sup> Stanford became increasingly isolated in his conservative attitude, although O'Connell's article does much to rescue his composition and teaching from the neglect that he, like many late-Victorian musicians, has suffered from since the First World War.<sup>28</sup> Stanford's attitude to Germany became increasingly severe with the outbreak of war, as we will examine below.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For example, in his 1909 parody of Strauss's style, the *Ode to Discord*, a setting of C. L. Graves's *A Chimerical Combination in Four Bursts*.

<sup>24</sup> 'Comments and Opinion: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford on Modern Orchestral Scores,' in *MS*, 10/6/1911, 351-2.

<sup>25</sup> Kevin O'Connell, 'Stanford and the Gods of Modern Music,' *MT*, 146/1890, 2005, 41.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* O'Connell also notes that Stanford had a 'deep ambivalence' to late nineteenth and early twentieth century musical developments in France (35). As regards Russian music, Gareth Thomas holds that Stanford, though relatively late in life, came to be influenced by both Glazunov and Rachmaninov, whose works he conducted very regularly and whose stylistic markers can be seen in his own work. Thomas also notes that it is unfair to regard Stanford as entirely wedded to a Brahmsian tradition, when he regularly encouraged his students to seek non-Austro-German models. See Thomas, *Impact of Russian Music*, chapter five, especially 136ff.

<sup>27</sup> This debate O'Connell traces back to Blake's disagreements with Reynolds in the early nineteenth century, and later to Whistler and Ruskin's notorious argument. Whistler sued Ruskin for libel in 1877, when Ruskin wrote of Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*, 'I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.' A discussion of the case in a wider cultural and aesthetic context may be found in Adam Parkes, 'A Sense of Justice: Whistler, Ruskin, James, Impressionism,' *Victorian Studies* 42/4, 1999, 593-629.

<sup>28</sup> O'Connell, 'Stanford and the Gods of Modern Music,' 41.

<sup>29</sup> Strauss of course was not the only composer to whom Stanford, generally resistant to modernism, objected: Dibble suggests that Stanford stuck firmly to a Brahmsian model in the face of the developments which were influencing the musical world by such varied composers as Reger, Moussorgsky, Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel. See Jeremy Dibble, *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 396.

Britain's relative lack of stature in compositional terms on the musical field has received considerable attention elsewhere, although the vibrancy of British musical life, the excellence of its orchestras, and its high value as a destination for visiting musicians were nonetheless valued.<sup>30</sup> For our purposes here, we should remind ourselves that art music, dependent to some extent (as Philip Bohlman has noted) on national institutions, is often inextricably linked – wartime or no – with notions of national history.<sup>31</sup> The fact that nationality in music was a live issue long *before* the war, and in particular, that there was a long-standing ambiguity of attitudes towards German influence on English music, is key to understanding the variety and intensity of reactions to Germany from musicians during the war itself.<sup>32</sup> In the following section, I examine how musical nationalism in Britain became embroiled in a very specific set of problems with regard to Germany once war had been declared.

### 2.3 Anti-German Attitudes Among Musicians, 1914-1918

The rhetoric that arose in wartime of deliberate enslavement of British music by Germans seeking to dominate musical life in this country was an emotionally heightened reaction (and that only from a few commentators) when there is in fact much evidence to show that, rather than seeking to enslave British music, German musicians had been highly supportive. This may be seen in some high profile instances, such as Richard Strauss's oft-quoted toast of Elgar – 'I raise my glass to the welfare and success of the first English Progressivist, Meister Edward Elgar,

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<sup>30</sup> See for example, Jeremy Dibble's chapter, 'Grove's Musical Dictionary: A National Document,' in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 33–50. Also, Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling's second edition of *The English Musical Renaissance 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); despite its evident bias against certain figures of the English Musical Renaissance such as Parry, Stanford and Elgar, this is nonetheless a useful resource on the founding of the Royal College of Music, and attempts to create a foundation for national music. The authors quote a speech written by Grove, which claims 'the whole German musical tradition' is 'English in essence,' 28.

<sup>31</sup> Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), xxiv.

<sup>32</sup> Education for British students in Germany became impossible; many British musicians were trapped in Germany and interned for the duration of the war. Much has been written in the form of personal memoirs of Ruhleben, one of several internment camps in Germany, particularly known for its population of musicians. See Foreman, 'In Ruhleben Camp,' 27–40. For a contemporary musical summary, see Edgar L. Bainton, 'Music in Ruhleben Camp,' *MT*, 1/2/1919, 72–73.

and of the young progressive School of English composers<sup>33</sup> – but there had also been the successes of Stanford, Delius, Mackenzie, Smyth and many other English composers in Germany, with performances in German opera houses and on the concert stage. In addition, the raising of musical standards in England, accomplished by many talented English men and women, had also been materially aided by visiting or resident Germans, such as Richter and Hallé, Manns and Rosa.<sup>34</sup> Recognition of such benefits was, however, scant once war had broken out.

Attitudes towards Germany and German music in wartime covered a broad spectrum and were often ambiguous. In this section, I examine some general comments made about German music, followed by a sample of views which maintained that there was value in German music. Others sought to find a compromise between German ‘frightfulness’ in war and German artistic leadership of past centuries.<sup>35</sup> One example of how the war had an impact on attitudes towards Germans in music may be seen at Materiality 6.

Isidore de Lara, a British composer who returned to Britain after decades in France and Monaco just before the war,<sup>36</sup> is one example of those who used public fora to disseminate strong anti-German opinions, particularly accusing Germany of an unhealthy influence on British music. Describing those influenced by German music as ‘idolaters,’ worshipping at the altar of ‘Teutonic Tone Deities,’ de Lara wrote:

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Lower Rhenish Musical Festival,’ *MT*, 1/6/1902, 402-403.

<sup>34</sup> To give some brief examples: Stanford had had his first operatic success in Germany, with *The Veiled Prophet* first produced in Hanover in 1881 and then all over Germany, and his second opera was also first produced there, in 1884. Neither of these had equal success in England, the *Veiled Prophet* not receiving any English performance until 1893. Plunket Greene, *Stanford*, 186-7. Ethel Smyth’s *The Wreckers* was performed at Leipzig, as *Strandrecht*, two years before its first British performance. Originally with a French libretto, *Strandrecht* had a German translation for its Leipzig première. Other Germans working in Britain had also explicitly attempted to give opportunities to British composers: Michael Balling, conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, wrote in 1912 to Percy Pitt asking if he himself had composed ‘an Overture or a Suite or something’, or if knew of other composers who had, as he wished ‘to bring out in each Concert one new piece and of course as many as possible of English or better British composers.’ Letter from Michael Balling to Percy Pitt, 14/2/1912, quoted in Foreman, *From Parry to Britten*, 50-1.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Frightfulness’ is usefully illuminated by Gregory, who points out that it is the literal translation of *Schrecklichkeit*: ‘To a modern reader, ‘frightfulness’ sounds rather twee. To understand the way it was used at the time, it is useful to substitute the term ‘terrorism.’ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 307, n.15.

<sup>36</sup> We will encounter de Lara again in chapters three and six below.

Constant performance of German works in this country has completely moulded the mind of the public here to the form and modes of expression adopted by the musicians of Germany [...] We might even say that, in the domain of what is known as serious music, for a very long period Germany was the Svengali of Britannia, who could only sing when under her hypnotic influence.<sup>37</sup>

Although de Lara wrote this specifically to promote a 1915 series of orchestral concerts of exclusively British music, as we will see below, such views were far from uncommon. In the war years, those who already held negative attitudes towards German influence on British musical life inevitably hardened their views. As Hynes has put it:

Once the war began [German] dominance quickly came to seem (to some Englishmen, at least) a sinister case of German imperialism, an invasion by craft and stealth of what should have been a solidly British art form.<sup>38</sup>

Cecil Forsyth, composer and author who had trained at the Royal College of Music, was one of many antipathetic to Germany. Dibble describes Forsyth as 'vivid, not to say pugnacious' in his expression of anti-German feeling.<sup>39</sup> The publisher Macmillan had commissioned Forsyth and Stanford to produce a concise history of music, which was published in 1916,<sup>40</sup> and Forsyth wrote the chapters on nationalism and modern British music.<sup>41</sup> He acknowledged German musical gifts, but cautioned against mere copying rather than developing a national idiom:

Every great artist – whatever his necessary pretences and accommodations – draws his vitality from the men and women, the rocks, rivers and mountains of his own country; and not from those about which he has read. [...]

It must be confessed that in almost every generation there are two classes of men

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<sup>37</sup> Isidore de Lara, 'English Music and German Masters,' *FR*, 1/5/1915, 847-853. Grove Music Online describes de Lara as 'a latterday Meyerbeer ... he produces effects without causes,' praising his orchestration whilst deploring his failure to make the most of his (particularly intellectual) talents. Nigel Burton and Susan Thach Dean, 'De Lara, Isidore,' *Grove Music Online*, accessed 8/2/2011, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45705>. Svengali, de Lara's image for Germany, was a violinist and hypnotist in the novel *Trilby* (1894) by George du Maurier. Svengali became the archetypal unwholesome or hypnotic influence over others, particularly in performance contexts. For an examination of issues relating to nationality as well as the role of Svengali, see Sarah Gracombe's 'Converting Trilby: Du Maurier on Englishness, Jewishness, and Culture' in *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 58/1, 2003, 75-108.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990), 74. Hynes is perhaps incorrect to ascribe such attitudes exclusively to wartime conditions, but they were certainly exacerbated during this period.

<sup>39</sup> Dibble, 'Grove's Musical Dictionary,' 33. Forsyth's writings may have given an image of a fiercely patriotic nationalist, although this had not prevented him from emigrating to the USA in 1914.

<sup>40</sup> C. V. Stanford and C. Forsyth, *A History of Music* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

<sup>41</sup> Dibble points out that it would have been difficult for Stanford to cover a period in which he himself featured. Dibble, *Stanford: Man and Musician*, 439.

working and talking in opposition to each other – the nationalists and the denationalists. And the artistic health and productivity of any community increases exactly with its proportion of nationalists [...] It is the quarrel of the creative mind with the receptive, of the originator with the imitator, of the man who loves his country with the man who loves someone else's, of the vulgar [...] with the truly cultured [...] of cloth with shoddy, and sterling with Brummagem. [...] In the field of music the two types – the nationalist and the denationalist – are clearly defined.<sup>42</sup>

Those he called 'denationalists' – and he does not name individual musicians, contenting himself with his stereotypes – were those who treated German music like a 'box of conjuring tricks', which eventually wears out and begins to show its workings. The 'nationalist,' however,

does not bring out his box of mechanical German toys and start them working merely to astound the natives. He may carry home with him a considerable knowledge of mechanics. But he brings home something more – the determination to build and run a steam plough. And, as no one but a drunkard would try to drive a plough with the plough-share in the air, he puts it in the soil – the soul of his own native land.<sup>43</sup>

Forsyth was already known pre-war for holding strong views on foreign influences: in 1911 he had claimed that every Englishman found in any foreign art-work something 'repellent to his own individuality,' and referred to the 'pernicious cult of the foreigner.'<sup>44</sup> This not only refers to the welcome that British audiences have traditionally given to talented performers from abroad, but this 'cult of the foreigner' might also include the British performing musician's habit of taking foreign-sounding names in order to gain more employment or a better reputation.<sup>45</sup> Fuller-Maitland had challenged Forsyth's views, but attitudes like this came to be expressed both more frequently and more strongly after the outbreak of war.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to note that public expressions of more or less muted antipathy

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<sup>42</sup> Forsyth in Stanford and Forsyth, *A History of Music*, 303 and 305. Oddly, Hughes and Stradling quote this passage but attribute it to Stanford, citing it as evidence that Stanford 'at last was brought to reject the Germanic tradition and its influence on the future of English Music.' (Hughes and Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance*, 88). Whilst there is no doubt that Stanford was very negative towards Germany, this section of the *History of Music* is clearly marked with the initials C. F. at its opening and is undoubtedly by Forsyth, not by Stanford.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 306.

<sup>44</sup> Cecil Forsyth, *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 270 and 119. Forsyth's xenophobic attitude towards successful foreign performers reveals a lack of understanding of London's importance as a prime musical destination, and the value such a reputation gave to native musical life in turn.

<sup>45</sup> See for example Dan Godfrey, *Memories and Music: Thirty-five Years of Conducting* (Hutchinson: London, 1924), 156 and 212.

<sup>46</sup> J. A. Fuller-Maitland, 'Opera in England,' *MT*, 1/2/1912, 83-5, a review of Forsyth, *Music and Nationalism*. The quotations from Forsyth are from Fuller-Maitland's review.



towards Germany, whether couched as antipathy to the present military struggle or in terms of resenting Germany's previous musical domination, were by no means the only view. Whilst this study concentrates on published views, and therefore inevitably relates what commentators said publicly, there is ample evidence of more varied and often more tolerant views expressed in private. Karen Arrandale's work on Edward Dent, for example, reveals a different set of attitudes altogether amongst musicians in circles other than those publishing in the mainstream. Dent, Professor of Music at Cambridge and correspondent to many young musicians in the front line during the war, spent his own war not only writing in the pacifist *Cambridge Magazine*, as Arrandale notes, but providing, in his correspondence, alternative thoughts about musical relations with other countries than were generally aired. Kennard Bliss, brother of Arthur Bliss, reacted with enjoyment in a letter to Dent about the latter's proposal of a 'chimerical scheme for re-founding decent relations with Germany by getting Germans & Belgians to play at the same desk in the orchestra.'<sup>47</sup>

The public expression of pacifist views or mild dissent with the prevailing orthodoxy of attitudes towards Germany was, however, very uncommon in the musical press. Whilst musicians may have expressed a variety of anti-German attitudes, as we have examined in this chapter so far, these were, in fact, comparatively mild when compared to public reaction outside the musical sphere. Panayi details the treatment of Germans in Britain, which may surprise many used to a notional British tolerance.<sup>48</sup> Gregory also gives a balanced account of the development of increased anti-German and subsequently general anti-alien attitudes.<sup>49</sup> What must be remembered are the extraordinary conditions of wartime, conditions which exaggerated already existing fears of foreign domination. Some idea of the level of fear that reigned may be gleaned from a 1914 novel (published

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<sup>47</sup> Arrandale, 'Artists' rifles,' 11, quoting a letter from Kennard Bliss to Dent held in the Cambridge University Library under reference CUL Add MS 7973/B/38. Kennard was killed at the Somme in 1916.

<sup>48</sup> See for example Panayi, *Enemy*, 223-258, for examples of riots involving thousands of people, destruction of property of German-born naturalised British citizens, as well as other forms of violence and theft arising from rioting. In addition, the violence spread to other foreign nationals, even those of allied nations.

<sup>49</sup> Gregory, *Last Great War*, 234ff; Gregory describes the 'the changing pattern of anti-Germanism.'

pre-war), *When William Came: A Story of London under the Hohenzollerns*.<sup>50</sup>

Although Saki's fictional vision of the German imperial eagle flying over Buckingham Palace illuminates peculiarly British fears of foreign domination felt by a nation used to unchallenged naval supremacy, wartime virulence far exceeded such concerns, and there were some particularly unpleasant anti-German reactions, especially among those who made capital out of people's fears, both financial and political. One such example was editor of *John Bull* and sometime MP, Horatio Bottomley. In his calling for a vendetta against all Germans, following the sinking of the Cunard passenger ship the *Lusitania* in May 1915 with the loss of nearly 1200 lives, he made no distinction between those naturalised and those not: 'You cannot naturalise an unnatural abortion [...] But you can exterminate it. And now the time has come.'<sup>51</sup>

Musicians were not immune from such fears – as DeGroot has said, 'Popular fears encouraged a tendency to believe the worst about the enemy [...] to make up and pass on stories which reinforced cultural stereotypes'<sup>52</sup> – but in general musicians seem to have been less prone to express publicly such outright hatred: I have found no musical publication expressing views as extreme as Bottomley.<sup>53</sup> Whilst the extreme language of annihilation, as expressed in the widely read *John Bull*, might indicate that such views were also widely held, it does not seem reasonable to

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<sup>50</sup> H. H. Munro (pseudonym Saki), *When William Came* (London: John Lane, 1914). The novel describes an England ruled by Germans, emphasising the vulnerability entailed in being an island. When the eponymous hero suggests resistance, a friend counters him in the following words: 'In a fortnight or so we could be starved into unconditional submission. Remember, all the advantages of isolated position that told in our favour while we had the sea dominion, tell against us now that the sea dominion is in other hands. The enemy would not need to mobilise a single army corps or to bring a single battleship into action; a fleet of nimble cruisers would be sufficient to shut out our food supplies.' Munro, *When William Came*, 31.

<sup>51</sup> Horatio Bottomley, *John Bull*, 15/5/1915, quoted in Panayi, *Enemy*, 233. Reaction to German 'atrocities reporting' is an interesting study: German atrocities, real or imagined, had an enormous effect. The Bryce report of 1915 based on 'first-hand accounts' from Belgian refugees in Britain – in reality often little more than hearsay – served to magnify fears. Accurate or not, historian John Horne points out that tales such as those of Germans carrying the severed hands of Belgian children in their pockets were 'not mere manipulation but mythic representations of real distress originating from traumatised civilian refugees and sometimes from Allied soldiers.' John Horne, 'German Atrocities 1914: Fact, Fantasy or Fabrication?', *History Today* 52/4, 2002, 47.

<sup>52</sup> DeGroot, *Blighty*, 187-8.

<sup>53</sup> In 1922, Bottomley was convicted of fraud (relating to 'Victory Bonds' sold through *John Bull* during the war) and imprisoned for seven years. 'Horatio Bottomley: An Extraordinary Career,' *Times* 30/5/1922, 18. Bottomley's version of patriotism continued beyond the war: he orchestrated a campaign against a Labour candidate in 1920, claiming that Ramsay MacDonald had 'drunk toasts to the Kaiser.' See Richard W. Lyman, 'James Ramsay MacDonald and the Leadership of the Labour Party, 1918-22,' *Journal of British Studies* 2/1, 1962, 147-8.

assume that such views represented any form of a majority of people in Britain at the time. I do not deny Professor Panayi's claim that the public disturbances he documents at times put extreme pressure on the government to respond to concerns over enemy aliens, but would argue that it is unfair to extrapolate these views to cover the majority of Britons. To accept this would be equivalent to judging all British residents today by certain sections of the tabloid press.

The intensity of responses to Germany's war actions is perhaps harder to understand with the remove of time, but it is certainly the case that many people felt deeply about injustice and fair play, and musicians were particularly keen to ensure that Germany was not still being unfairly favoured now that trade with the enemy was an offence. Trading with the Enemy legislation was passed immediately on the outbreak of the war, in 1914, and received an amendment that same year.<sup>54</sup> Although in legal terms, the prohibition on trading with the enemy meant only trading with firms physically based in enemy territory,<sup>55</sup> the subject was not always clear to members of the public and the topic became the object of much discussion, including in legal cases which had varying outcomes, for example the case of the piano firm of Bechstein, which may be seen at Materiality 3. In the case of the music business, transactions completed just before the outbreak of the war, for example the receipt of the first copies of the miniature score of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* from the German printers in May 1914, could not be extended or pursued: in late 1914, the music critic of the *Yorkshire Post*, Hubert Thompson wrote to Henry Clayton of Novello, requesting a review copy of this score.<sup>56</sup> In January 1915, Clayton replied, enclosing a copy of the miniature score, but explaining that more copies could not be made as the plates were in Germany. In his letter, Clayton wrote the words 'Germany' and 'Leipzig' in miniature, both to highlight and to mock the unease felt by many at the close business connections British and German musical firms had had mutually beneficial connections over many years, which were now interrupted. Duncan Boutwood has pointed out that only three years before the war, Novello in its house journal the *Musical Times*,

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<sup>54</sup> John McDermott, "Trading with the Enemy: British Business and the Law during the First World War," *Canadian Journal of History* 32/2, accessed 22/10/2013, <http://cjhistory.synergiesprairies.ca/cjhistory/index.php/cjhistory/article/view/7483>.

<sup>55</sup> John McDermott, 'Trading with the Enemy,' 204.

<sup>56</sup> Duncan Boutwood, 'Gerontius as Ammunition? – A Newly Discovered Letter,' *Journal of the Elgar Society* 15/5, 2008, 17-20.

made proud boast of its German employees, but in wartime such boasts were proving to be a liability to the company.<sup>57</sup>

Many expressed their feelings about Germany in terms of patriotic duty. Hubert Bath, for example, had a strong sense that using even music printed in Germany was favouring the enemy:

The playing of any music of German origin, whether classic, comic, good, bad, or indifferent, or any music, *even British*, monopolised by firms of German origin or under German control, is distinctly the subtlest and most dangerous form of inducement to assist the enemy's trade and interest.<sup>58</sup>

Although we have seen that there was a wish to emerge from under German domination even before the war, these explicitly negative attitudes towards Germany were directly shaped by the war, as historian Adrian Gregory suggests:

We will understand the First World War a great deal better if we jettison the teleology of the war as an inevitable outcome of mass jingoism and anti-German antagonism. Instead we should try to get the causality right: although these phenomena were not absent, they did not cause the war. It was the other way around: it was *the war* that massively increased anti-Germanism and popular patriotism.<sup>59</sup>

The entangled and close-knit musical ties with Germany were such that, for many, no easy dichotomy of 'British good/German bad,' was possible. At the very least, many found it impossible without a great deal of soul-searching and introspection.<sup>60</sup> The case of Hubert Parry, which I discuss below, highlights something of the complexity of musicians' responses to Germany, as both a part of the wider response of society to the extreme conditions of war and at the same time, a

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>58</sup> Hubert Bath, 'German Music,' *MN*, 13/11/1915, 462 and 464.

<sup>59</sup> Gregory, *Last Great War*, 38.

<sup>60</sup> Elgar's delay in completing *The Fourth of August*, one part of his *Spirit of England* setting of Binyon poems, is sometimes attributed to his difficulty in accepting the negative portrayal therein of the German nation. In addition, his own fundamentally Germanic idiom may well have provided a stumbling block to separating himself from Germany. The German nature of his work was remarked upon during the war (without censure): see Daniel Gregory Mason, 'A Study of Elgar,' *Musical Quarterly* 3/2, 1917, 288-303. See also Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' 335-8, which examines two different reasons that Elgar may have had for withholding the performance of *The Fourth of August*. Firstly, Cowgill suggests, Elgar may well have wished to avoid offending his good friends the Speyers and other German connections, such as Richter. By the time of the performance of *The Fourth of August*, as Cowgill notes, the Speyers had left Britain for America and Richter was dead. R. Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' in B. Adams, ed., *Edward Elgar and his World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 336. Secondly, he was perhaps disinclined to participate in a simplistic portrayal of the war as 'a conflict between English knights and German devils,' Cowgill, 'War Requiem,' 339-41.

uniquely individual response.

The struggles of musicians such as Parry to reconcile the Germany they thought they knew with the Germany the country was at war with were widely shared, within and without the musical sphere. As Rachel Cowgill has pointed out, the notion of two Germanys can also be seen in H. G. Wells's pamphlet written early in the war, *The War that Will End War*.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Cowgill notes that Elgar's difficulties in setting some of the text for *The Fourth of August* are mirrored in 'To Goethe,' another of Binyon's poems which formed the texts for Elgar's *Spirit of England* (his 1914 collection *The Winnowing-Fan*).<sup>62</sup>

In his address to RCM students in September 1914, Parry articulated his own struggle:

I have my own confession to make. [...] I have been for a quarter of a century and more a pro-Teuton. I owed too much to their music and their philosophy and authors of former times to believe it possible that the nation at large could be so imbued with the teaching of a few advocates of mere brutal violence and material aggression.<sup>63</sup>

Parry had reluctantly concluded that the war was justified but he, as with many musicians, chose to believe that it was only a small minority of people who had corrupted Germany: the 'hideous militarism of the Prussians [...] has poisoned the wells of the spirit throughout Germany [...] by cynical manipulation of the Press.'<sup>64</sup> He later came to believe that even the 'peasants and clerks' had become convinced by militarism, and that Germany had to be beaten or such aggression would 'override justice and truth and honest living throughout the world.'<sup>65</sup> He could also be found, however, speaking out against violent anti-German prejudice. In 1918, only two months before his death, he noted in his diary a tea-party conversation about the Germans: 'I did not take part in the talk much,' wrote Parry in his diary, 'till Maud appealed to me on Lady Johnston's expressing approval of crucifying

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<sup>61</sup> Cowgill, 'War Requiem,' 341.

<sup>62</sup> 'What think you, Sage?' a line from Binyon's 'To Goethe,' quoted in Cowgill, 'War Requiem,' 358, n.75.

<sup>63</sup> C. H. H. Parry, *College Addresses Delivered to Pupils of the Royal College of Music*, ed. H. C. Colles (London: Macmillan, 1920), 222.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* See also Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 470.

<sup>65</sup> Letter to his daughter Dorothea (Dolly) Ponsonby, quoted in Dibble, *Parry*, 488.

Germans, when I let fly.<sup>66</sup>

Parry's own struggle with his attitude towards Germany in some ways mirrored that of Stanford, whose ambivalence was such that in 1915 he wrote to the press in support of continued performances of German classics, but also (unjustly) accused the publisher Augener of being an enemy firm.<sup>67</sup> In 1915, even whilst acknowledging how ironic it was that German-born musicians such as August Manns and Carl Rosa had taken such a proactive interest in British orchestral and operatic music, he singled German musicians out for particular attack in an article in the *Quarterly Review*.<sup>68</sup> Claiming that Germany had made a concerted and deliberate attempt to retard the progress of British music, the *Musical Herald* summarised his attitude: 'There has been no foreign recognition of the enormous strides which this country has made. The attitude of Germany has prevented this.'<sup>69</sup> The article was also a strongly worded personal attack on Richard Strauss – of whom Stanford had 'an entrenched dislike.'<sup>70</sup>

Richard Strauss is the counterpart of Bernhardt and the General Staff. He relies increasingly upon the numbers of his executants, upon the technical facility of his players, upon the additions and improvements to musical instruments, upon the subordination of convention to effect, upon the massing of sounds, and the superabundance of colour to conceal inherent poverty [...] Strauss set out to conquer the world by force and surprise, when he knew that he was powerless to do so by charm or beauty [...] a new order of Capellmeister-musik [*sic*] so rich in colour and in machine-made effects that only the acute observer could see the old Capellmeister-musik still lurking there, disguised in glittering garments and so loud and flamboyant as to conceal its real vacuity.<sup>71</sup>

Stanford did not dismiss all of Strauss and conceded that *Tod und Verklärung* and *Don Juan* had moments of beauty, but considered that since those compositions Strauss had shown 'steady decadence.'<sup>72</sup> Stanford saw in Strauss the epitome of not only 'aesthetic excess' but of 'ethical degeneracy,' evidenced by German behaviour

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<sup>66</sup> Shulbrede D, 5/8/1918. This incident is also referred to in Graves's biography of Parry, Charles L. Graves, *Hubert Parry: His Life and Works* (London: Macmillan, 1926), 98.

<sup>67</sup> Dibble, *Stanford*, 421. I will examine below some of the published arguments for and against the performance of German music.

<sup>68</sup> Stanford, 'Music and the War,' in C. V. Stanford, *Interludes: Records and Reflections* (London: Murray, 1922), 102-124, originally published in *Quarterly Review* (1915). The article is erroneously dated 1916 in both the British and the American 1922 editions of *Interludes*.

<sup>69</sup> 'The War and Music,' *MH*, 1/6/1915, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Dibble, *Stanford*, 381.

<sup>71</sup> Stanford, 'Music and the War,' 108-9.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, 110.

in the war.<sup>73</sup> O'Connell notes that 'one may suspect some personal bitterness in the attack,'<sup>74</sup> but Stanford's accusations in 'Music and the War' may be understood to target Strauss and Germany not only as culpable in their own right but as scapegoats, a focus for his wider criticism of the development of art and music that may have been inexpressible in times of supposed national unity. Nonetheless, the contrast between the support Stanford received in Germany over the years of his career – German honours, his years of German study and his friendship with Brahms – and the attitudes expressed during the war, is symptomatic of the struggle between two views of Germany experienced by many.

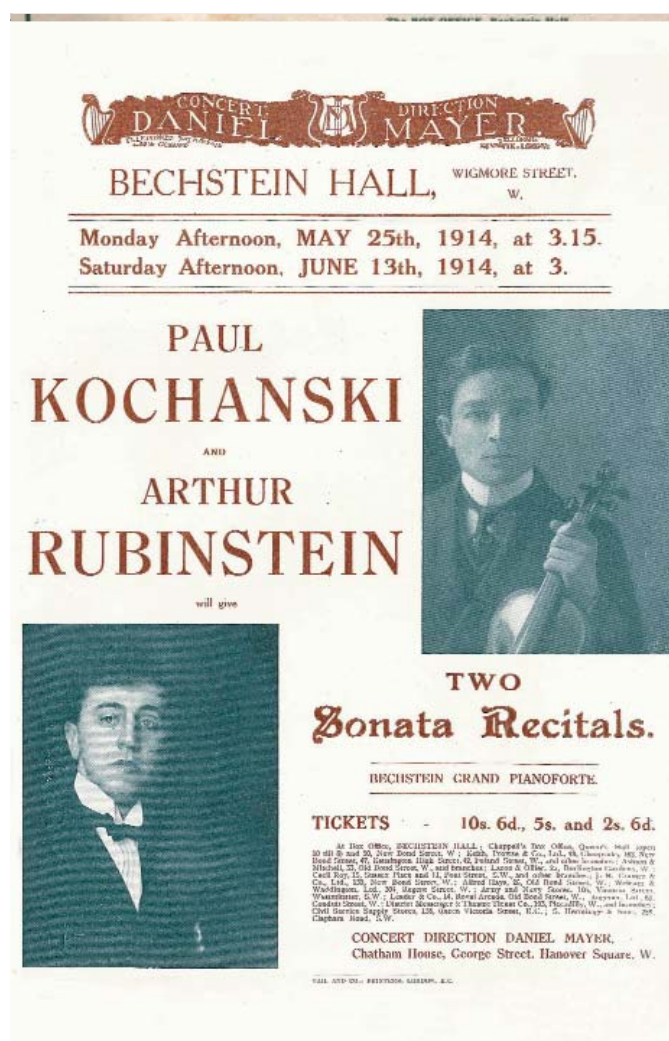
For some, the outcome was never in question: prior to investigating the debate about whether or not to ban German music which arose almost as soon as the war began, in the following section I look briefly at examples of musicians and commentators who took the time and trouble to place on public record their appreciation for German music.

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<sup>73</sup> O'Connell, 'Gods of Modern Music,' 41.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, n.25.

### Materiality 3 From Bechstein Hall to Wigmore Hall<sup>75</sup>



The posters (above and below) illustrate the effects of the First World War on the Bechstein Hall, which transformed it into the Wigmore Hall. A 1914 legal decision had allowed London's Bechstein branch to continue trading, as no funds were being transferred to Germany under its British general manager, but it ultimately became a war casualty. This was largely due to the campaigning of Herbert Sinclair, editor of *The Pianomaker*, a journal founded in 1913 which 'declared war on German pianos, refus[ed] to carry their advertisements and inaugurated a new style of venomously jingoistic advocacy in striking contrast to the older trade papers'.<sup>76</sup> The war intensified such views, which were shared among some (though not all) British piano firms.<sup>77</sup> In 1916, Sinclair's legal counsel told London County Council's Theatre and Music-Hall Committee that Bechstein's proprietors were alien enemies, asserting that to renew the firm's licence would be 'detrimental to the interests of this country'.<sup>78</sup> Despite contrary evidence that allowing the firm to continue

<sup>75</sup> Images courtesy of Wigmore Hall Archive.

<sup>76</sup> Ehrlich, *The Piano*, 152.

<sup>77</sup> Ehrlich, *The Piano*, chapter 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Times*, 5/11/15, 5.



trading would benefit the British economy, the licence was not renewed. Under the Trading with the Enemy Act, Bechstein's London affairs were wound up and its premises and hall sold at auction to Debenhams for £56,500, only slightly more than half the hall's original building costs.

**WIGMORE HALL** Tuesday, January 16th  
(LATE BECHSTEIN) at 3.15 o'clock  
WIGMORE STREET, W.

**RE-OPENING**  
OF THE WIGMORE HALL  
BY  
**M. WASSILI**  
**SAFONOFF**

AND

**ALBERT**  
**SAMMONS**  
**BEETHOVEN**  
**SONATAS**  
ERARD GRAND PIANOFORTE

Tickets (including tax), Stalls 8s. and 5s. 3d. Balcony (unreserved), 2s. 8d.

May be had at BOX OFFICE, WIGMORE HALL, CHAPPELL'S BOX OFFICE, Queen's Hall, and 40, New Bond Street; RUTH PROWSE & CO., Ltd., 25, Strand; ASHTON & MITCHELL, 35, Old Bond Street, W., and Branches; LACON & OLLIER, 5, Burlington Gardens, W.; CECIL BOW, 14, Queen's Place, and Branches; J. B. CHAMBER & CO., Ltd., 109, New Bond Street, W.; ALFRED HAYS, 35, Old Bond Street, W.; WEBSTER & WADSWORTH, 306, Regent Street, W.; ARMY & NAVY STORES, 106, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.; LEADER & CO., 14, Strand Arcade, Old Bond Street, W.; DISTRICT MESSENGER CO., 105, Piccadilly, W., and Branches; CIVIL SERVICE STORES, 128, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.; WHITE, 27, High Street, Kensington; G. ROGERS & SON, 281, Finchley Road, N.W.; SAVILLE & CO., 29, Finchley Road, N.W.; MOULTY & SON, Rush House, Blackheath; SHEPHERD & CO., 223, Levensham High Road; S. HERMITAGE & SONS, 128, Clapham Road, and at—

Telephone: 7544 Gower.  
Telegrams: Musicians-Picco-London

**L. G. SHARPE, 61 Regent Street, W**

Commentators rued the closure: 'The closing of Bechstein Hall [...] is a decided loss to our artists'.<sup>79</sup> The pianos themselves, although dropped in early 1915 as the royal family's supplier, continued to be played by many, and a poem (of some sentiment) highlighting the British 'soul' put into the German frame by its wartime use, may be seen in the appendices.

The reopening concert in the renamed Wigmore Hall in January 1917 was a conscious statement of allied musical solidarity whilst maintaining the prominence of British musicians. It linked a British talent, who had won greater recognition during the war, violinist Albert Sammons, and Russian pianist Vassily Safonoff, a representative of an Allied nation. Their choice of music was that great emblem of the supranational, Beethoven. The chosen make of piano, clearly advertised on the poster, was a French Erard.

<sup>79</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Prospects of the Summer Season,' *Ref*, 18/6/1916, 6.

## 2.4 Acceptance of German Music

*The Musical Herald* 467

**Why Use  
German Editions?**

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Is the most up-to-date and best Edition of the Classics, etc. 800 Volumes.

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Figure 2 Two advertisements on a single page of the *Musical Herald*, December 1914, illustrating the complexity of attitudes towards German music: next to the advertisement suggesting that German editions of published music should be forsaken for British ones, the figure of Beethoven is invoked as the exemplar for, and ultimate judge of, piano technique.

Sir Walter Parratt stated: 'I cannot give up my Bach and my Beethoven.'<sup>80</sup> Such unwillingness to forego his pleasure in German music did not mean that he was unequivocally in favour of Germany. Parratt was one of the many who made a distinction between German music, which he thought could express 'the love and nobility in human nature' and a quite separate 'German temper and German methods in war.'<sup>81</sup> This idea of 'two Germanys' was one way in which musicians tried to cope with the war, as we saw in Parry's deliberations above. That Parratt should specify Beethoven is unsurprising, since Beethoven's resistance to tyrannical imposition of one country's will upon another was such a part of his

<sup>80</sup> Walter Parratt, 'Our German Church Music,' *MMR*, 1/6/1916, 185-6.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

heroic reputation.

Various commentators in the early days of the war wrote to the musical press expressing views in favour of German music with various degrees of enthusiasm and from varied motivations. Some, like this writer in the *Musical Standard*, subscribed to the idea that to throw everything German out was to lose the baby with the bathwater:

[A] boycott on German music would be disastrous [...] If Germany has sinister Nibelungen smiths, she also has heroes and goddesses. If she forges weapons of destruction she also mixes healing draughts [...] If Germany contains Metz and Strassburg she also contains Bayreuth and Weimar [...] If she has given birth to the *Junker* she has also given birth to many great men who have enriched our lives. I repeat: artists are a nation by themselves. They are bound together by divine gifts of imagination and temperament. Truly, the pen is mightier than the sword.<sup>82</sup>

‘Let us not forget however that we are not at war with the Bachs, the Beethovens, the Wagners or the Strausses, the bringers of beautiful gifts, but with the intolerant spirit of recent growth,’ ran another article in the *Musical Standard* early in the war.<sup>83</sup> Many people were much relieved to find such journals expressing views which chimed with their own more reasonable ones:

Sir – I must write and thank you for your remarks about Wagner [...] they should silence once and for all that miserable body of ignorant but noisy busybodies that threaten to carry the public along with it in its false conception of flag waving. I trust too that your remarks may fall under the eye of the controllers of opera at Covent Garden and that we may expect the usual performances of Wagner’s works in the spring [...] and failing German singers – poor devils, I am afraid many of them will lose their voices if not their bodies – have English performances by British singers.<sup>84</sup>

This letter is unusual because, rather than merely extending tolerance towards German music of the past, it expresses compassion for living, ordinary German citizens who are likely to lose their life in the war. This was not the editorial line, however: the *Musical Standard* may have been keen on fostering the notion of music as a universal property and unwilling to sacrifice German music on the altar of national hostility, but it stressed that the country was fighting ‘a very dangerous and threatening militarism.’ Any thoughts of peace, the editorial feared, ‘were very

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<sup>82</sup> D. C. Parker, ‘Musicians and the Arts,’ *MS*, 5/9/1914, 179.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Notes and Comments,’ *MS*, 12/9/1914, 189.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Our Letterbox,’ *MS*, 19/9/1914, 214.

close to treason.<sup>85</sup> This is another version of the ‘two Germanys.’

The idea of ‘two Germanys,’ then, existed in two forms: one clear-cut (‘two Germanys’ meant a binary distinction between living and dead, between ‘good’ and ‘bad’), and a second, more nuanced understanding that there was no black and white case of right and wrong, of which more below. Composer Algernon Ashton fell into the former camp, surprisingly for one who had spent a part of his childhood in Leipzig.<sup>86</sup> He felt that all music of living composers should be boycotted during hostilities: ‘No one in his sense would, of course, think in consequence of this awful war, of boycotting the great German composers of the past. They belong to all nations, and remain for all time. But we ought to draw the line at some of the *living* composers of the “Fatherland” and leave them (for a time at any rate) severely alone.’<sup>87</sup> I return to the question of boycotting below.

Ashton’s attitude was by no means typical and his simplistic division into acceptable and not acceptable German music co-existed alongside other, far more interesting dialectical interpretations of Germany.<sup>88</sup> This understanding is represented in Parker’s comment, noted above, which recognised that Germany may have had ‘sinister Nibelungen smiths,’ but also ‘heroes and goddesses. If she forges weapons of destruction she also mixes healing draughts.’<sup>89</sup> This understanding contains within it the possibility of German salvation: were Germany to come to her senses, to see the inherent possibilities in her *Kultur*, rather than what Britons perceived as the inherent threats, then there was indeed hope. This understanding, though infrequently expressed, is an important part of the complex set of attitudes towards Germany and we will return to it below.

Lancelot (F. Gilbert Webb), principal music critic for the Sunday newspaper *The Referee*, made an attempt to address the complication of attitudes towards Germany when he expressed the following thoughts, early in the war:

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<sup>85</sup> ‘Other Times, Other Manners,’ *MS*, 26/9/1914, 222.

<sup>86</sup> Lewis Foreman, ‘Ashton, Algernon,’ *Grove Music Online*, accessed 15/3/2011, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01408>.

<sup>87</sup> Algernon Ashton, ‘Modern German Composers,’ *MS*, 17/10/1914.

<sup>88</sup> I am indebted to Paul Harper-Scott for suggesting this fruitful line of enquiry.

<sup>89</sup> D. C. Parker, ‘Musicians and the Arts,’ *MS*, 5/9/1914, 179.

Great orchestral music is the expression of humanity, not nationality. It may possess the idioms of a nation's outlook, but such idioms are only like the mannerisms of a great preacher [...] If Wagner is not to be played, neither should any of the works of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn, Strauss, and many other composers, and we might as well shut the doors of our concert-rooms. On the other hand, vocalists would do well, especially British singers, to relieve us from the flood of German Lieder, for the greater part mispronounced, and many estimable people might take this opportunity to drop the pretence of understanding and admiring songs sung in languages of which they have a very slight acquaintance. One of the many benefits that will accrue from this wicked and ghastly war is that we shall awaken to the value of our own artistic productions and become more appreciative of the charms of the music of nationalities other than German.<sup>90</sup>

This quotation exemplifies the feelings of many that the classics of German music were international property, and to be played and appreciated for the good of humanity. However, it is framed cautiously, Lancelot perhaps not wishing to be too closely connected with the present-day reality of Germany. It is interesting to note that of the many commentators who spoke in lofty terms of music for the benefit of all people, one finds no public examination of the fact that this must logically include present-day Germans, musicians and others. The intellectual leap required to accept the music of an enemy nation was a manageable step, as long as it was already well established in the canonical repertoire. Few represented in the mainstream musical discourse, however, were able to exercise sufficient intellectual imagination to connect the humanity of the listener in Britain with the listener in other lands.

One exception is Edward Dent, as we noted above. Dent may not have been able to publicly express his views in print during the war, but he wasted no time post-war in attempting to re-establish musical relationship with those in countries that had been formerly hostile, going out in 1919 to visit German contemporary music festivals, for example, for *The Athenaeum*.<sup>91</sup> This imaginative leap, whereby those caught up in the war could empathise with those of opposing sides, was not regularly found in print, although in King Albert's Book, which is the subject of Materialities 2 and 5, we can see several examples of mutual understanding. The public expression and recognition of this common humanity was often left until

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<sup>90</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: War and Art: A Pressing Need,' *Ref*, 23/8/1914, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Arrandale, 'Artists' Rifles', 15. Dent backed up his commitment both to music's forward progress and harmonious relationships between nations in his presidency of the International Society for Contemporary Music on its founding in 1922.

after the war. Others who felt sympathy towards Germany, if only on certain occasions, also waited to put such expressions publicly into writing post war, as, for example, when Constance Peel recalled witnessing a Zeppelin burst into flames following an air raid:

Almost unconsciously I began to cry, 'Hooray! Hooray!' too. But suddenly I stopped. We were cheering whilst men who were after all very bravely doing what they thought it their duty to do were being burned to death. Although it was right of me to rejoice that this airship was brought down, yet I could not but feel glad that I had not cheered when later I was told that when a car reached the scene of its fall [...] of a crew of forty only fourteen were found on the ship. These were in a standing position grasping the steel struts of the machine. When they went to lift the bodies the hands of all came off at the wrists and remained fixed to the metal. How *loathsome* war is!<sup>92</sup>

Similar contemporary comments are few and far between in public discourse. This is not to say such ideas were not thought or expressed, nor such connections made, but it is telling that public expression of them was limited. From the point of view of the sudden redefinition of much familiar music as 'enemy' music, however, of many of English audiences and performers preferred composers, how was the matter to be handled? The next section discusses this question of performing 'enemy' music.

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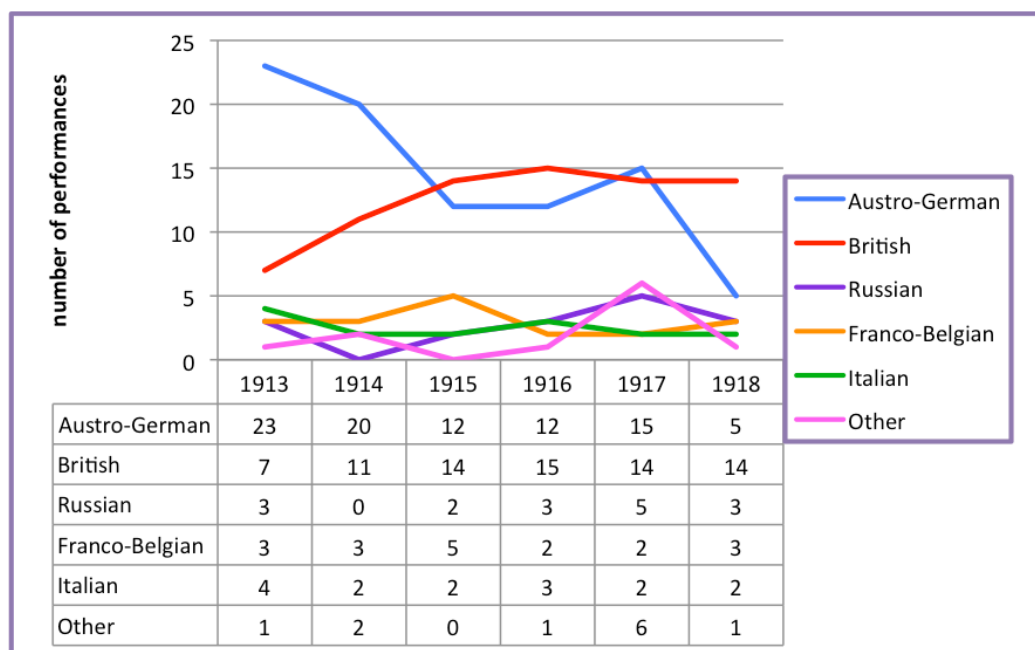
<sup>92</sup> Peel, *How We Lived*, 145-6.

## Materiality 4 Programming at the Royal College of Music – a comparison of autumn term programmes 1913-1918

This chart represents a sample of the Royal College of Music's programming by nationality of composer. For these purposes, Austria and Germany have been grouped together under Austro-German, France and Belgium have been grouped as Franco-Belgian, and the label 'Other' includes anything other than Austro-German, British, Franco-Belgian, Russian or Italian. In the period under scrutiny here, those categories which I have labelled 'other' included works from composers from Norway, Finland, the wider Austro-Hungarian empire (such as Dvořák) and the USA. Surprisingly, in these autumn term samples, no Spanish composer appears, though this is not to say that Spain would not have been represented had the whole of the College year been sampled. The autumn term was chosen as a proportion of the college's yearly programming, and to provide a manageable sample size. Concerts in this term included one or two orchestral and/or choral concerts, and several chamber concerts.

The figures show a gradual decline in the proportion of Austro-German works for the first two years of the war, and a gradual increase in that of British works. Austro-German works appear to have increased again in number between 1916 and 1917, perhaps representative of the gradual acclimatisation to conditions of war and a reassertion of norms. The sharp drop in number of Austro-German works in the 1918 season is in fact unrepresentative: the first concert of the autumn term that year consisted entirely of the music of Hubert Parry, who had died in early October that year. Had this not been the case, it is possible that the return of Austro-German works might have continued to rise, although it seems as if British works were afforded a more consistent place in the programme.

The proportion of composers from Allied nations might be expected to have risen although this chart shows that the numbers remained surprisingly constant.



Composers grouped by nationality and number of performances October to December 1913-1918 at the Royal College of Music: data taken from both programmes and in-house magazines at the Royal College of Music.

## 2.5 Attitudes towards the Performance of 'Enemy' Music: a Ban on German Music?

German music did not arouse quite the pitch of rhetoric in wartime Britain that it did in France, where, in 1916, the National League for the Defence of French Music was formed, which distributed a circular referring to hunting down and surrounding the enemy, 'to forestall the return of baleful infiltrations in the future.'<sup>93</sup> French attitudes were understandably stronger in comparison to British ones, in view of the Prussian defeat of France in 1870 and the presence of German soldiers – and the battlefield – on French soil. Nonetheless, the debate in Britain was at times lively. However lively the discussions, though, German music managed largely to retain a high profile on concert programmes.

In *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War*, Glenn Watkins asserts that, despite continued popularity for German music in Britain throughout the war, 'shortly after the outbreak of hostilities all German music was temporarily banned.'<sup>94</sup> Watkins is not the only scholar to understand that German music was banned. Hughes and Stradling categorically state 'the Government imposed a ban on performances of German music.'<sup>95</sup> In fact no formal ban on German music was imposed. Nevertheless, the implications of the Trading with the Enemy legislation of 1914 did have an impact on the introduction of newer German music, or on the hiring or purchasing of scores and parts, for example, since such activities, of potential benefit to enemy powers, were legally banned.

The evidence of concert programming seems to show that the classics already well established in the repertoire did not suffer from the inconvenient effects of this legislation. Although it undoubtedly had an impact on programming decisions, and may have been responsible for the gradually declining number of 'novelties' or newly-composed works widely noted as the war progressed,<sup>96</sup> it remains true that

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<sup>93</sup> C. Caballero, 'Patriotism or Nationalism? Fauré and the Great War,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52/3, 593.

<sup>94</sup> Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 45.

<sup>95</sup> Hughes and Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance*, 85.

<sup>96</sup> The *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review* noted in 1916 that there were few newly introduced works or 'novelties' in the current concert season, and supposed the choice to be political, though it may have also been due to the restrictions on trade with the enemy: 'It cannot be denied, moreover,



no formal ban was ever introduced, although performing or purchasing music which would thereby have benefitted enemy businesses would have contravened wartime regulations. As Leanne Langley has noted, for example, certain works fell out of the Proms wartime repertoire because of ‘the proscription of any established works that would have produced fees for “enemy” publishers (e.g., by Mahler or Strauss, much of Bartók, and the symphonies of Sibelius).’<sup>97</sup> It is this possibility of generating income for enemy publishers that may well have given rise to the idea that the Government instituted some form of formal ban on German or enemy music. Isolated instances of specific repertoires either being included or excluded on an individual basis do in fact exist, for example a 1915 series of Albert Hall promenade concerts arranged by Thomas Beecham and Landon Ronald, which excluded all Austrian or German music, to which I shall return. To speak of German music as having been banned in any official sense is therefore misleading, but this is not to say that such a topic was not considered. In fact, the issue of whether or not German music should be banned, was a subject of debate throughout the war.

In substantiating his claim of a temporary ban on all German music, Watkins specifically alludes to the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, whose 1914 season opened on August 15, eleven days after the declaration of war. Strauss’s *Don Juan* was indeed dropped – ‘expunged,’ as the *Musical Times* put it – which, as Arthur Jacobs describes it, was ‘hardly surprising,’ Strauss being ‘the pre-eminent living German composer.’<sup>98</sup> This was but one of the items cancelled that had been published in the advertised programme of the season; other items dropped included

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that the “novelties” of continental origin which are occasionally brought to light apparently owe their performance more to a desire to complement our Allies than to any striking intrinsic interest.’ ‘Concerts of the Month,’ *MOMTR*, 19/11/1916, 104.

<sup>97</sup> L. Langley, ‘Building an Orchestra, Creating an Audience: Robert Newman and the Queen’s Hall Promenade Concerts, 1895–1926,’ in *The Proms: A New History*, ed. Jenny Doctor, David Wright and Nicholas Kenyon (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 70. Only Sibelius’ symphonies, published in Germany, were, according to Arthur Jacobs, banned during the war because they would have generated performing fees for the publishers; his other music not published in Germany was performed. Jacobs, *Wood*, 149–150. ‘Trading with the enemy’ was illegal as of the very beginning of the war: for a full account of the economic impact of the war and the idea of ‘business as usual’, see John McDermott, “‘A Needless Sacrifice’: British Businessmen and Business As Usual in the First World War,” *Albion* 21/2, 1989, 263–282.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Promenade Concerts,’ *MT*, 1/9/1914, 578; Jacobs, *Henry J. Wood*, 148. Goossens notes that Wood ‘wisely substituted’ the Tchaikovsky *Capriccio italien* for the Strauss, but that German music reappeared shortly afterwards. Eugene Goossens, *Overture and Beginners: A Musical Autobiography* (London: Methuen, 1951), 108.

Korngold's *Sinfonietta*. However, on 1 September 1914 an orchestral suite by Bartók was performed, even though Bartók was Austro-Hungarian and therefore a living enemy alien. There is no record of why Bartók's music was accepted and others' not, and no press discussion of his status as an 'enemy alien.' In subsequent years, further Bartók works, although planned, were not performed, and Mahler's works suffered the same fate.<sup>99</sup> Understandably, new Austro-Hungarian and German works were, in any case, not available due to the practical difficulty of obtaining scores and parts, regardless of attitudes, as well as the difficulties of trading with enemy firms, as noted above.

Although the work of Richard Strauss was not initially deemed appropriate at the opening of the 1914 Proms season, his music soon reappeared.<sup>100</sup> His works were performed on eight different occasions during the remainder of the 1914 season, although they did not reappear at the Proms until after the war. *Tod und Verklärung* was performed three times; *Don Quixote* and *Don Juan* once each, and *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* twice.<sup>101</sup> The subsequent disappearance of Strauss's works can be attributed not only to the restrictions on trading with the enemy but also to a hardening of attitudes towards Germany. Anti-German attitudes became more vehement following the beginning of Zeppelin attacks on civilians in Britain in 1915, reports of German atrocities against Belgian civilians exacerbated by the Bryce report and particularly by the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915.<sup>102</sup> The 'great masters,' however, from Bach to Wagner and Brahms continued to be performed and even celebrated, although Brahms was sometimes held to be suspect, as we shall see below.<sup>103</sup>

Although it did not affect Robert Newman's remaining programming, audience

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<sup>99</sup> Jacobs, *Wood*, 149.

<sup>100</sup> For the continued strong presence of Richard Strauss on Proms programmes as a living composer of an enemy nation during the 1939–45 war, see Jenny Doctor, 'The Parataxis of British Musical Modernism,' *Musical Quarterly*, British Modernism 91/1-2, 2008, 101.

<sup>101</sup> *Tod und Verklärung* performed on 25/8/14; 22/9/1914 and 15/10/1914; *Don Quixote*, 8/9/1914; *Don Juan* 9/9/1914; *Til Eulenspiegel*, 27/8/1914 and 8/10/1914.

<sup>102</sup> Wilson, *Myriad Faces*, chapter 17: 'Committee of Inquiry: Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium,' 182-191.

<sup>103</sup> Strauss's work was performed elsewhere in Britain: the *Musical Herald* noted a performance of *Tod und Verklärung* in Belfast, with no reference to Strauss's nationality, describing it rather as 'Richard Strauss's impressive tone poem'. 'News from all Parts: Belfast and District,' *MH*, 1/5/1915, 213.

response to the September 1914 performance of *Don Quixote* was said to be ‘rather cold’:

A member of the orchestra told us an interesting point with regard to the audience at the present crisis. They appear to welcome Wagner and the older German school with their accustomed fervour, but patriotism seems to make them look askance at works by living Teutons.<sup>104</sup>

Despite some programme alterations in the 1914 Proms, then, certain living enemy composers were performed, as well as many German works by dead composers. It is thus difficult to find concrete evidence for Watkins’s belief that there was a ban on German music, temporary or otherwise, although he may have taken into account the initial cancellation of the Monday night Wagner programme of the Proms. This was a decision taken by a management initially uncertain as to public reception of Wagner. It turned out also to be – perhaps involuntarily – a canny piece of public relations and market research, as it provoked an outcry. Chappell, the lessees of the Queen’s Hall, thus had justification for devoting one night in six weekly Proms to a composer from an enemy nation, but they also received every indication that such nights would continue to be well patronised by the paying public.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> ‘Promenade Concerts,’ *MN*, 19/9/1914, 210.

<sup>105</sup> Wagner’s devotion to German nationalism was well known. This did not prevent his success in countries opposed to Germany. It had not prevented his success in France; French Wagner mania flourished in the late nineteenth century even despite his farce *Eine Kapitulation*, describing the polluting effect of French culture on German *Kultur*, making light of the suffering of the Parisians defeated by Prussia in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–71. Gerald D Turbow, ‘Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France,’ in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. David C. Large and William Weber (London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 134–166. For a discussion of attitudes to Wagner in France during the First World War, see Rachel Moore, *Performing Propaganda*, 94–125.

## Children's Hymn in time of war.

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TUNE—"BURRAGE GROVE."

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Bless them, Father, as they go.

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Arrangement for Men's voices (T.T.B.B.)

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A selection of sea songs arranged for mixed voices.

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| THE BAY OF BISCAY.....        | Davy    |
| YOU GENTLEMEN OF ENGLAND..... | Calcott |
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the Pianoforte accompaniment arranged from the full score  
by PERCY E. FLETCHER.

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intended to be performed on Empire Day.

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Figure 3 Wagner and Rule Britannia: an advertisement from the *Musical Herald*, 1/4/1915.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Advertisement from the *Musical Herald*, 1/4/1915, 183, demonstrating the equal standing of the 'Song of the Rhinemaidens' with editions of 'Rule, Britannia,' in the publicity department of J Curwen and Sons. The choice of *Götterdämmerung* may indicate an attitude of wish-fulfilment or

The Wagner cancellation created enough public comment for the directors of the Queen's Hall Orchestra, in the person of Robert Newman, to make a statement in the various musical journals, including the *Monthly Musical Record*:

Sir, The Directors of the Queen's Hall Orchestra think that some explanation of the change of programme on Monday evening, August 17, is due to their subscribers and to all who have so loyally supported the Promenade Concerts in the past. The substitution of a mixed programme in place of a wholly Wagnerian one was not dictated by any narrow-minded intolerant policy, but was the result of outside pressure brought to bear upon them at the eleventh hour by the lessees of the Queen's Hall. [...] They take this opportunity of emphatically contradicting the statement that German music will be boycotted during the present season. The greatest examples of Music and Art are world possessions, and unassailable even by the prejudices and passions of the hour.<sup>107</sup>

Newman's letter also appeared in the *Musical Standard*, followed by a letter from Chappell themselves, denying that Newman was a 'victim of compulsion' and expressing the view that 'the arts of music and painting, speaking in a universal language, are, above all others, exempt from the atmosphere of national strife.'<sup>108</sup> Robert Elkin, historian of the Queen's Hall, believed that it was indeed Chappell & Co who had exerted pressure on Newman to substitute Wagner with a Franco-Russian programme.<sup>109</sup>

Wagner's popularity throughout the war is proven by the extraordinary figures quoted in the *Era* annual in a retrospective of the music of 1917. The Harrison-Frewin opera company, visiting Liverpool, had invited votes for or against a revival of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*: 182 votes against the opera were set against an overwhelmingly positive response: 4,632 votes in favour.<sup>110</sup> Wagner's music continued successfully in other parts of the country, despite occasional outbursts from people who thought he was unacceptable in wartime.<sup>111</sup>

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prophecy, in drawing a parallel between the end of the rule of the gods and the hoped-for end of the current regime in Germany.

<sup>107</sup> Robert Newman, 'Correspondence,' *MMR*, 1/9/1914, 252.

<sup>108</sup> 'Our Letter Box,' *MS*, 28/8/1914, 166.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Elkin, *Queen's Hall 189–1941* (London: Rider, 1944), 31.

<sup>110</sup> 'Music in 1917,' *Era Annual 1918*, 50–56.

<sup>111</sup> See for example Stephen Lloyd's chapter in Foreman, *Oh, My Horses!* on 'Bournemouth: A Microcosm of Musical England,' 175–205, in which he notes a postcard sent to Dan Godfrey, conductor of the then Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, and champion of British music, from a 'Disgusted Englishwoman,' who objected to Wagner on the programmes of the orchestra: 'What the devil do you mean by playing German music, you beastly pro-German?' (186).

It is worth noting that even in France, Wagner held a special place in the affections for many. Caballero notes that of a 1916 survey of musicians as to whether or not Wagner should be banned after the war (and in France the attitude to Wagner during the war was much less accepting than in Britain) less than a third favoured a total ban. Wagner's music often seems to have carved out a special place of its own, somewhat aside from other German composers:

The French public divided German music into three categories: classic or 'consecrated' works, contemporary works, and Wagner. This peculiar, threefold classification militated against blanket oppositions to music from across the Rhine and encouraged personal, sometimes bafflingly idiosyncratic, attitudes.<sup>112</sup>

Relatively early in the war, Joseph Holbrooke wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* suggesting that 'no German music whatever should figure in our concert programmes just now,' as Robin Legge quoted him.<sup>113</sup> Legge thought, as did many, that this was unwise; but he also noted little difference between British musicians who wrote pieces that sounded quasi-Germanic by training, and the genuinely German. He stressed that the music was the important thing, especially its appeal to an audience, not the nationality of the composer:

I will not express my own view of the matter beyond suggesting that I cannot see a great difference between much of the music of decidedly 'German' atmosphere, which masquerades as British music, because it was composed by a native of Great Britain, and the equally unguine article 'made in Germany' to day! The question, I mean, is one of music, not of music's so-called nationality. Would all who feel as Mr Holbrooke feels have all our German or alien enemy pictures in our splendid art galleries hung face to the wall during the war? [...] I venture to think we need not quarrel about who wrote the music that the public at present will listen to, but try to discover what that music is that they will listen to and pay to hear. How otherwise can the giving of concerts be anything else but a lamentable failure? [...] There is an abundance of music of the most beautiful character and worth that surely has not yet lost its power of attraction, and really just now it does not signify whether its composer came from or wrote in Moscow or Mile End, Paris or Plumstead, or elsewhere in the wide world. For the moment do let us realise that it is the music that is the thing, not the birthplace of the composer.<sup>114</sup>

The subject of German music was relatively high profile in public terms, and was raised in the House of Commons in July 1915, when Wagner and the Proms were

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<sup>112</sup> Caballero, 'Patriotism or Nationalism?', 606-7, n.30. The strength of attitudes to Wagner is still a matter for debate, one which Brian Magee profitably investigates; see 'Wagnerolatry,' in his *Aspects of Wagner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-44.

<sup>113</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music and War, *DT*, 24/10/1914, 6.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

mentioned: perhaps this is behind Hughes and Stradling's claim that there was a government ban on German music. The reference to German music was, in fact, merely a passing one, made in the context of a debate on a completely different matter. Sir Arthur Markham's opposition to German music was only part of a vehement – and lengthy – outburst in which he concentrated on military matters (small arms manufacture, the Dardanelles campaign). His reference to music was a small digression relating to German influence. The end of this section of the parliamentary debate reveals the ignorance of one Member of Parliament on matters musical:

Sir A. MARKHAM The House does not appreciate the fact that we are at war. Take, for instance, the case of Sir Edgar Speyer, who, as everyone knows, is the proprietor of the Queen's Hall.<sup>115</sup> I suppose it is because he is of German origin that we in this country are to be treated during the next few weeks by Sir Henry Wood to a series of concerts entirely composed of German music. I have the whole of the programmes here, from which it will be seen that some of the concerts are to be devoted entirely to Wagner's music [...] people are not recognising the seriousness of the position. I cannot understand how people can go to listen to German music, when every people in the world, except ourselves, would not tolerate during a time of war that they should be entertained by German music. But as the Queen's Hall belongs to him, I suppose we in this country are to be instilled with German virtues.

Mr. R. MCNEILL Is there no Beethoven in the programme?

Sir A. MARKHAM No, the whole of the programme at some of these concerts contains no music except German.

Sir F. BANBURY Beethoven was a German.<sup>116</sup>

German music came to the attention of parliamentarians on other occasions during the war, usually on matters of business (when or if a publishing company such as Schott should be wound up, or whether or not action should be taken about a piano firm in Yorkshire whose shares were largely in the hands of German nationals, for example).<sup>117</sup> On one occasion a question was asked about a group of German internees who had marched through a village, accompanied by a band. The parliamentary answer revealed that the internees themselves owned the instruments which had not therefore been provided from government money; that they had not actually played whilst marching *through* the village but only outside it,

<sup>115</sup> Speyer was not the proprietor of the Hall, but rather sublet it from Chappell and Co.

<sup>116</sup> HC Deb 28/7/1915 vol. 73 cc2301-56. See below for a brief examination of the way in which Beethoven was often held to be above merely national identities.

<sup>117</sup> A written question about Schott was answered on 14/12/1916: 'Sir H. DALZIEL asked the President of the Board of Trade why the music-publishing business of Schott and Company, Great Marlborough Street, London, W., has not yet been wound up under Section 1 of the Trading With the Enemy (Amendment) Act, 1916.' HC Deb 14/12/1916 vol.88cc906-7W. And in March 1916, Sir Arthur Markham asked the President of the Board of Trade about an ostensibly British piano firm in fact being largely in the hands of German shareholders: HC Deb 9/3/1916 vol.80c1705.

and that permission for them to play had only been granted on the basis that ‘no German tunes were played.’<sup>118</sup> Concerns regarding such minutiae were rarely reflected in the musical press, which displayed a wider range of responses. Musicians in wartime displayed their fair share of sweeping judgements, but there are also refreshingly reasoned responses.

As the war continued, the debate about the acceptability of German music periodically recurred. No clear-cut consensus emerged and various policies were used: they range from the acceptability of any enemy composer so long as he was dead, to concerts – individually or as a series – where there was a conscious policy of playing no German music. Any choices made about restricting German music were sometimes made for the conscious reason of promoting British music (as I examine in the next chapter) or were taken in the belief that wartime conditions required a change in repertoire, as with the Beecham/Ronald series in 1915.<sup>119</sup>

Ronald and Beecham funded a series of Promenade Concerts in the Albert Hall themselves, although it was short-lived, with small audiences, and lost a great deal of money. There were various reasons for the early closure of the scheme, including the fact that London had recently experienced its first Zeppelin bombing raid, understandably creating a nervousness in a public as yet unused to such phenomena. Although Beecham attempted to persuade Ronald that the Albert Hall would be both a welcome diversion and a safe refuge from air raids, Ronald understood that the hall was seen as an enticing target. Another reason for the poor attendance was what Lucas has described as ‘a patriotic step too far,’ which was the refusal to play music by any Austro-German composer, living or dead.<sup>120</sup> Ronald recalled it thus:

We made one great mistake. We undertook to eliminate German music entirely. Imagine programme after programme without one work by Bach, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and above all *Wagner!* We were asking for trouble and we got it!<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Hansard 13/5/1915, accessed 7/2/2011, [http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written\\_answers/1915/may/13/german-band-at-halton#S5CV0071P0\\_19150513\\_CWA\\_11](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1915/may/13/german-band-at-halton#S5CV0071P0_19150513_CWA_11).

<sup>119</sup> John Lucas, *Thomas Beecham: An Obsession with Music* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 122.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Landon Ronald, *Myself and Others: Written Lest I Forget* (London: Sampson Low Marston, 1934), 184-5.



There was often a good deal of sophistry put into reclaiming composers from a particular (enemy) nation and re-establishing them as somehow international, transnational, or supranational. Beethoven is one example. The attempt to describe Beethoven as Flemish rather than German predates the war by some years: Seymour Reeves noted, in a discussion of the characteristics of German music in 1908, 'I omit mention of Beethoven because his origin was perhaps more Flemish than German.'<sup>122</sup> This view, understandable if logically indefensible, persisted in wartime: Grattan Flood, in August 1915, described Beethoven as 'the great Netherlands composer Beethoven.'<sup>123</sup>

Perhaps more surprising than a willingness to maintain the successful balance of concert programmes filled with sure-fire musical favourites, whatever their origin, was a festival devoted to German music (Brahms, Bach and Beethoven) in May 1915. The *Monthly Musical Record* noted that:

The Three B Festival (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms) [...] conducted by the eminent Belgian, Henri Verbrugghen, was a notable example of that broadmindedness which should animate the spirit of all artistic enterprises.<sup>124</sup>

Standing against such praise of 'broadmindedness,' however, were those who were vociferous in their expression of anti-German feeling. The next section examines some of the views of those who commented publicly in the musical sphere that to be broadminded in the way of the festival celebrating three great German composers was not merely tolerant, but pro-German.

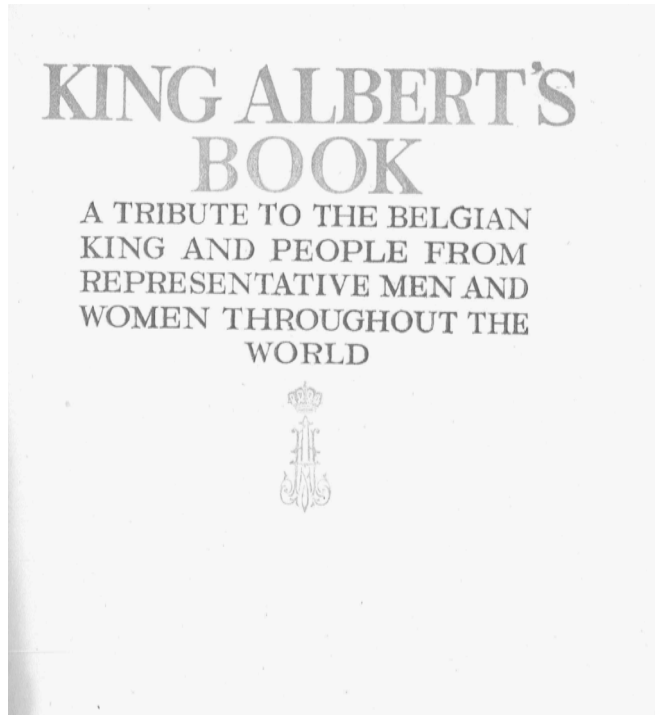
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<sup>122</sup> 'Nationalism in Music: Further articles by John F. Runciman and A. Seymour Reeves', *MS*, 27/6/1908, 400-401.

<sup>123</sup> 'Dr Grattan Flood writes to us,' *MT*, 1/8/1915, 474.

<sup>124</sup> 'Editorial: Music in War-Time,' *MMR*, 1/5/1915, 121.

**Materiality 5 *King Albert's Book* (2): 'A rose among the thorns of warfare',<sup>125</sup>**



*King Albert's Book* published at Christmas, 1914, functioned as both a tribute to the Belgian nation and a fundraiser for the *Daily Telegraph Belgian Relief Fund*. Extremely popular, it acted as a vehicle for the groundswell of feeling for Belgium's plight in the war. As Jean Stengers has put it, 'people were filled with admiration, almost to the point of fanaticism, for heroic and martyred Belgium, and particularly for King Albert, as can be seen in the famous *King Albert's Book* published with enormous success at Christmas 1914.'<sup>126</sup> The variety of offerings (see Materiality 2) represented a widespread willingness to support Belgium's cause and to subscribe to the war effort.

Thirteen musicians contributed to the book, two in prose (Paderewski and Saint-Saëns) and the remaining offering pieces of music, either especially written (e.g., Debussy's *Berceuse Héroïque*) or already published: Stanford's contribution of two verses of his setting of *For all the Saints*, 'For lo there breaks a yet more glorious day', chosen as suitably optimistic.<sup>127</sup> Ethel Smyth offered her *March of the Women*,

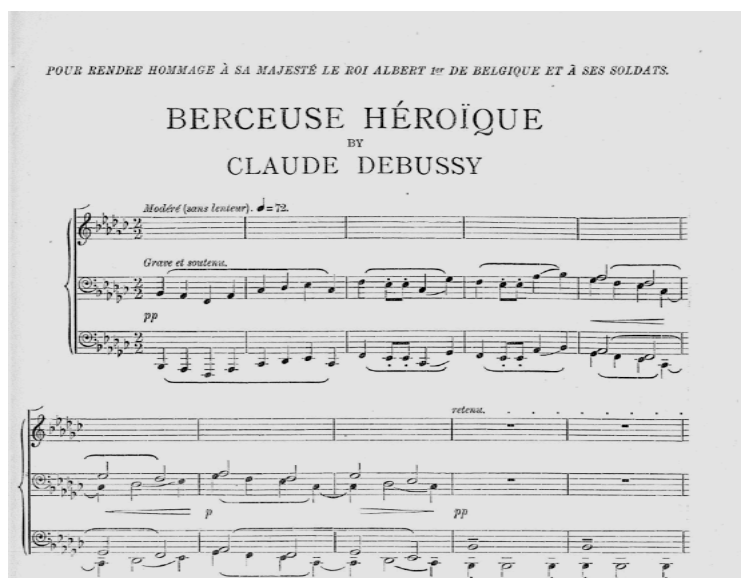
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<sup>125</sup> George Willoughby, 'Tributes to King Albert' in *The National Magazine: An Illustrated American Monthly* 45, 1916-1917, 236. Willoughby praised the book highly, describing it as one of the 'real treasures' of his library, and asserting that 'the book is one that will be taken up again and again, and will, no doubt, in future years be looked upon as a rose appearing among the thorns of warfare.'

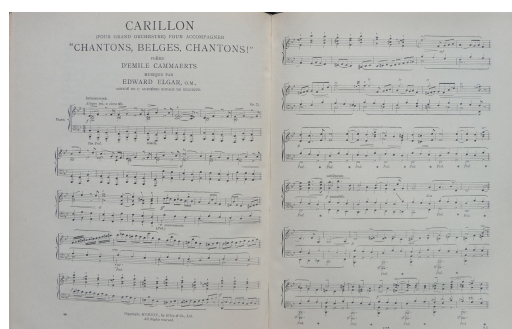
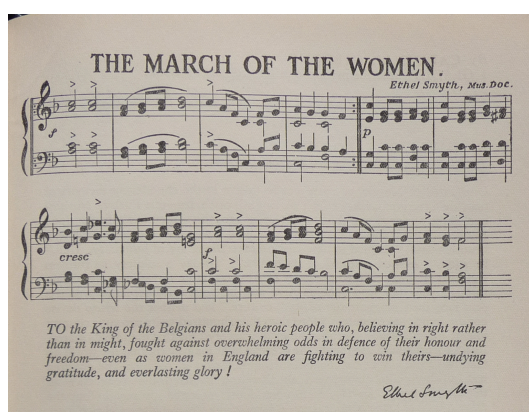
<sup>126</sup> Jean Stengers, 'Pre-war Belgian Attitudes to Britain: Anglophilia and Anglophobia,' *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 82/1-2, 2004, 474.

<sup>127</sup> Debussy's contribution caused him some heart-searching both at the time and afterwards; he described the *Berceuse* as a 'simple visiting card,' see Watkins, *Proof Through the Night*, 88.

linking with typical strength of character the Belgian cause with that of women's suffrage.



The pieces of music printed were: Johan Backer-Lunde, *She comes not when noon is on the roses* (words by Hubert Trench); Frederic Cowen's setting of John Galsworthy's *Hail! A Hymn to Belgium*; Elgar's *Carillon* which set Cammaerts's poem 'Chantons, Belges, Chantons!' for orchestra and reciter (a wartime success, despite the *Times* noting, 'If this is all that the tragedy of Belgium was can bring from a musician, it seems a small tribute'<sup>128</sup>; Edward German's *Hymn: Homage to Belgium, 1914*, later published with added lyrics during the war, and also revived in World War Two; P.E. Lange-Müller's piano piece *Lamentation*; a song by Liza Lehmann, *By the lake*;<sup>129</sup> Alexander Mackenzie's setting of a Browning poem, *One who never turned his back*; a piano piece by Mascagni: *Sunt lacrymae rerum!*; and a Victor Hugo poem set by André Messager, *Pour la Patrie*.



<sup>128</sup> 'New Work by Sir E. Elgar,' *Times*, 8/12/1914, 7. See chapter three (3.3) for an alternative reception of *Carillon*.

<sup>129</sup> This song appeared occasionally on wartime concert platforms, although one Australian critic called it 'a tedious composition,' 'Saturday Popular Concerts,' *Argus* (Melbourne), 27/11/1916, 11.

## 2.6 Germanophobia

'No reasonable patriot can be expected to share these pro-German enthusiasms,' wrote the editor of the *Musical Standard* in early 1914,<sup>130</sup> but the 'pro-German enthusiasm,' he so despised was in this case merely a review of a volume of letters from Joachim, edited by Fuller-Maitland. As the war progressed, such evidence in a musical journal of real dismissal of anything German (simply on the basis of its nationality) became rarer, but at this very early stage of the war sensitivity was running high:

With our sons and relations being butchered for sheer Teutonic swollen-headedness it is no time to enjoy or extol other conquests, however artistic.<sup>131</sup>

In January 1916, Dr Henry Coward, a musical director who had taken a large contingent of Yorkshire singers on two extended tours of Germany in 1906 and 1907 to great acclaim, suggested that no German music written after 1870 should be played, the date chosen because of the German defeat of France in that year.<sup>132</sup>

In fact, 1870 was often taken to be the year that the decline of Germany began, when 'Germany turned from greatness in search of bigness; [...] she forsook idealism for commercialism.'<sup>133</sup> This alleged decline of Germany from cultural greatness to militarism, with *Kultur* no longer being something to be emulated but resisted, had been a concern of many, as we have seen above, even before the war, and many commentators agreed that Germany seemed to have lost her way spiritually. Rachel Cowgill has discussed the implications for Elgar's *Spirit of England* of the view of Germany in the war as demonic, and the emphasis placed on this by Ernest Newman in his review of the work.<sup>134</sup> But despite these widely accepted views of Germany as having lost her way, most commentators realised that to set an arbitrary date, before which German music was acceptable and after which it was beyond the pale, would be to deprive audiences of a great deal of the

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<sup>130</sup> 'Editorials: A Difficult Task,' *MS*, 21/11/1914, 350.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> 'Echoes of the Month,' *MH*, 1/1/1916, 24.

<sup>133</sup> 'Sidelights on German Art the Great Church-Music Imposture,' *MT*, 1/8/1915, 457. The article examines the German domination of the market for Catholic church music under the auspices of the *Cacilianverein*, and accuses Germany generally of, since 1870, having a mission 'to supply foreign nations with the cheapest shoddy they would put up with, and her Cecilian wares are the cheapest shoddy that ever debased the name of music,' (*ibid.*, 459).

<sup>134</sup> Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' 340. See, for example, Ernest Newman's review of part of Elgar's *The Spirit of England*, which I discuss below, in which he refers to a Germany which has become a 'foul thing.' Ernest Newman, 'Elgar's Fourth of August,' *MT*, 1/7/1917, 295.

most popular music, a sacrifice that they were not prepared to make.<sup>135</sup> There were more strongly worded objections, however.

One die-hard objector, whose correspondence appeared regularly in the musical press complaining about slavish commitment to German and Austrian masters, was Hubert Bath. He was a prime mover in an attempt to safeguard British interests in music, calling a meeting in the small Queen's Hall on 13 October 1914. Not long after the 'Three Bs' festival, Bath wrote to the *Music Student*, to complain about the musical snob who:

turns up his superior nose at the average British composition before he hears it. [He is] obsessed by Brahms, Bach and Beethoven [...] unable to recognise any really British element in a work because that element is lacking in him which he affects to expect in the work of our native composers, i.e., nationality.<sup>136</sup>

It is noteworthy that the three composers that Bath criticises for having a monopoly on the British music lover's imagination were the same three that were celebrated in the 'Three Bs' festival only two months earlier.

Brahms's music, in particular, was not always as welcome as the festival might suggest. The only objection to the 'Three Bs' festival that was raised by the *Music Student* was in relation to Brahms. The editorial noted that to hold such a festival in wartime was a 'daring thing,' although they had 'no quarrel with the great men of old' who:

[...] would surely not approve the slaughter of innocent Belgians, the sinking of a great passenger ship, or the use of gases supplied from the retort of Hell.

Brahms, however, fell into quite another category, as the editor held that Brahms *might* have fallen into approval of German militarism:<sup>137</sup>

Brahms [...] belonged to the modern Germany, already in his time swelling with national conceit. It is conceivable that he might have placed himself alongside the army of artists, writers, men of learning, and divines whose genius and scholarship have been no safeguard once their line of thought had been dictated to them by the military

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<sup>135</sup> A compromise that the *Yorkshire Daily Post* suggested would be to play only German music whose composers died before the war, a compromise the *Herald* endorsed.

<sup>136</sup> 'What is British music?' *MStud*, 1/9/1915, 13.

<sup>137</sup> Such a suspicion was perhaps based on Brahms' Op.55, *Triumphlied* written to celebrate the 1871 defeat of France and the unification of Germany.

ruling class. Personally we should have preferred not to hear his beautiful *German Requiem* just now [...] it is impossible to hear 'Blessed are they who mourn' without recalling that the composer's countrymen are responsible for the mourning [...] It was therefore [...] to say the least of it, an *inartistic* thing to include this work in the scheme.<sup>138</sup>

A performance of Brahms's *Requiem* was criticised on another occasion, when several commentators felt that, in its use as a commemoration for the fallen of the war at the Oxford House Mission in Bethnal Green, it was an inappropriate choice.<sup>139</sup> Not all, however: the *Monthly Musical Record* recognised that there were very few great requiems written and that this one, despite its nationality, was nonetheless incomparable in beauty and 'sublimity of conception.'<sup>140</sup> In addition, the writer pointed out, Brahms's genius was reckoned to be, like Shakespeare, universal, adding further approval.

There was also a reaction to the use of German as a language in song. Although Lancelot of the *Referee* wrote, 'To the well-balanced English mind spite and hatred are as futile and self-destructive [as] the fulmination of German professors and scientists and of authors who have solemnly declared they will never read anything in English again,'<sup>141</sup> he thought that the presence of the German language in drawing-room singing was to be avoided. In his article on 'An Uncouth Tongue,' he explains his reasons for wishing that the use of German should be stopped:

Is it kind, is it right, is it decent to ask an audience which must contain many mourners to listen to a language that must bring back associations which it is the object of the entertainments to remove for the time being? Be it remembered, language is a living force. Words conjure up mental visions, memories, and a thousand associations. Music in the abstract is indefinite, but words are definite. They tell of the present moment, they impress realities of the passing hour. Next to the bodily presence of a German soldier in our midst the most hateful sensation is to hear the guttural sounds of his language. When the war is over and Time's gentle hand has made our sufferings less acute we may hear the German language without painful and vindictive feelings, but at the present moment it is surely an inconvenient medium of amusement. Why should we hear German sung in our concert rooms? As a language it is only half-developed. It has not rid itself of the troublesome declensions, it has not even arrived at rationality in its genders. [...] It is hidebound by petrified traditions and clumsy rules. [...] For vocal

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<sup>138</sup> 'Bach – Beethoven – Brahms: The Recent Festival,' *MStud*, 1/6/1915, 192.

<sup>139</sup> 'Editorial: A Mistake,' *MH*, 1/4/1915, 169. In 1918, the *Requiem* would have been performed in English. A performance of the work after the signing of the Armistice was again criticised, this time by Scholes in a letter to the *DT*; he was particularly aghast that it was being performed in celebration of the war victory, although 'the cathedral authorities have ingeniously dropped the adjective.' Percy Scholes, 'Thanksgiving Music,' *DT*, 16/11/1918, 3.

<sup>140</sup> 'Editorial,' *MMR*, 1/4/1915, 89.

<sup>141</sup> Lancelot, 'An Uncouth Tongue,' *Ref*, 28/3/1915, 5.

purposes – I say this deliberately – it is far less musical than English.<sup>142</sup>

Lancelot's sweeping dismissal of German as 'half-developed' is no doubt an attitude we can attribute to the conditions of wartime, or perhaps to general belief in the superiority of all things British, but his point that it was insensitive to sing in German surely resonated with many. Arthur Bliss had a similar reaction to a German soloist he saw on the concert platform after the death of his brother Kennard, and wrote to the press about it:

I do not know whether as a class musicians have been less affected (except financially) than other professions, but when straight from being wounded on the Somme I went into a London concert hall and heard a public vociferously applauding a German soloist, it gives me furiously to think.<sup>143</sup>

This is the same Bliss, however, who in his memoir recalls that whilst posted for a while back to England following an injury on the Somme, he spent some of his convalescence in Bath, where he 'made use of a room with a piano':

I now associate the hours in this room almost entirely with the music of *Götterdämmerung*. Apart from *Die Meistersinger* I had not yet seen any Wagner operas. *The Ring* existed for me only in a piano transcription. I was deeply immersed in a romantic attachment, and Wagner's music seemed to provide just the right outlet for the emotions: in that little room in Bath I stormed through the conflicts between Brünnhilde and Siegfried with much ardour.<sup>144</sup>

It can be seen, then, that there were a variety of strong reactions to German music, for various reasons, even within the same person. Whatever the prompt for such reactions, the strength of some of these attitudes sometimes meant that practical action was taken against musicians of enemy nationality, and it is to such concrete activity directed against 'enemy' musicians – who may in fact have been nothing of the sort – that I now turn.

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Foreman, 'Winnowing Fan,' 108: Foreman attributes this letter, without specific date, to the *Musical Times*, although I have been unable to find this letter within the pages of that journal. Neither Bliss nor Foreman state which soloist was performing, but it is unlikely that it was a non-naturalised person.

<sup>144</sup> Bliss, *As I Remember*, 45.

## 2.7 Practical Actions Taken Against ‘Enemy’ Musicians

Eugene Goossens asserted in his 1951 memoir that:

At the outbreak of war, all German professional musicians in Britain – and their number was legion – were sent back to the Fatherland, to the great delight of many British artists, who found themselves with increased work and considerable improved chances of livelihood.<sup>145</sup>

Whilst it is true that there was some repatriation between 1915 and 1916, it is simply not the case that all German musicians were sent back to Germany. Memoirs written at such a remove may well be inaccurate (he was writing nearly forty years after the event) and Goossens has elsewhere been noted as an unreliable source, but this is an important error to correct.<sup>146</sup> Panayi explains the different phases of internment (initially only of reservists of the German army) and repatriation, which was sporadic and often inconsistent.<sup>147</sup> Many foreign players and conductors, like Michael Balling the conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, were in Germany or otherwise abroad when war broke out, unable (or unwilling) to return,<sup>148</sup> but there were still many German and other players in British orchestras, as this example from an editorial in the *Musical News* shows:

We were talking to a member of the Queen’s Hall Orchestra the other day and he made the following significant remark: ‘The question of nationality is very awkward with us.’ [...] Though several German members of the orchestra are in their native land and are not permitted to return, there are many still at Queen’s Hall and the above remark was made in answer to our pertinent question, ‘How do these gentlemen like playing the National Anthem every night?’ As a matter of fact, they do not like it at all, but they grin and bear it for business reasons. Personally, they are much liked by the rest of their confreres but it is awkward all the same. Spirited arguments take place in the dressing-rooms, and there is a feeling amongst the British section that in spite of them all being good fellows, it would be better to have the orchestra all British.<sup>149</sup>

This mixed attitude is a good example of the variety of opinions shared by musicians. The German players referred to here were well-liked by their colleagues but there were ‘spirited arguments’ and an admission that an all-British orchestra would be more appropriate. A similar awkwardness is manifest in the way in which many institutions were forced to deal with long-standing colleagues of enemy

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<sup>145</sup> Goossens, *Overture and Beginners*, 110.

<sup>146</sup> Lucas, *Thomas Beecham*, 123 (note).

<sup>147</sup> Panayi, *Enemy*, chapter 3, ‘Internment and Repatriation,’ 70-98.

<sup>148</sup> Professor Lierhammer of the Royal Academy of Music, in Austria in August 1914, joined the Austrian army.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Comments: The Awkwardness of Nationality,’ *MN*, 17/10/1914, 281.



origin, naturalised or otherwise. This was a problem that the conservatoires in particular were obliged to confront.

The various conservatoires had professors who were born in states now defined as 'enemy,' and not all were naturalised. Documents from the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music (GSM) show that each institution had to consider its policy with regard to professors of enemy nationality very early on in the war. They further had to decide if they would take any action in the case of staff born in Germany or Austria but since naturalised. The way the matter was dealt with at the GSM made the national press, as we shall see.

Anti-German attitudes had been felt at the conservatoires even before the war; in 1912 Landon Ronald had weathered an anti-German storm, finally succeeding in retaining the GSM's German pianos:

I have an all-British orchestra of which I am justly proud; I produce British works, which I deem worthy of a hearing; I engage British artists – known and unknown – but that is not to say that I must never play a foreign composition or engage a great foreign artist. This would not be patriotism on my part – it would be crass ignorance.<sup>150</sup>

However, Ronald was less successful in maintaining his independence once war had broken out and the Corporation of London, whose Music Committee was responsible for the GSM, insisted on the sacking of all German, Austrian and Hungarian professors. At a meeting in September 1914, the committee resolved that 'all subjects of an alien enemy' be excluded from the school. This seems decisive enough but is, in fact, a much milder form of the initial directive: the minutes show that the original wording instructed that all German, Austrian or Hungarian professors, '*naturalised or otherwise*' were to be dismissed.<sup>151</sup>

The GSM's action was widely remarked upon in the national press. The headlines from just a small selection of papers reveal that somehow this action had touched a nerve:

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<sup>150</sup> Quoted (without further attribution or identification of source) in Bridget Duckenfield, *Oh Lovely Knight: A Biography of Sir Landon Ronald* (London: Thames, 1991), 79.

<sup>151</sup> Minute Book of the City of London Corporation, London County Council Music Committee, 176, COL/CC/MDC/01/19, London Metropolitan Archives.

'Enemy Music Professors' (*Daily Telegraph*)  
 'No Enemy Music Teachers' (*Daily Graphic*)  
 'More Aliens Banned' (*Evening News*)  
 'No Alien Music Teachers' (*Pall Mall Gazette* and *Daily Mail*)  
 'No Alien Enemy Musicians' (*Daily News and Leader*)<sup>152</sup>

However, not all of the articles approved the action. The *Musical News* thought that fair dealing was a more important way of handling such matters:

The announcement that the Music Committee of the City of London has decided to dispense with the services of all the Professors on the staff of the Guildhall School of Music who are of German, Austrian or Hungarian nationality, will be received with mixed feelings. [...] It is hardly to be wondered at if the impulse should be obeyed to treat the foe as the foe treats us [...] That is the fortune of war, and must be endured. At the same time, there is moderation in all things, and it seems to us that cases ought to be dealt with on their merits, without sweepingly indiscriminate measures. There are widely respected foreigners amongst us who have deliberately cast in their lot with this country, because they prefer it to their own; their likes and their sympathies are entirely British, despite the fact that they were born abroad. If they have become naturalised Britons, they have every right, morally as well as legally, to be treated on exactly the same terms as native-born citizens. Not only on personal grounds, but on the broader basis of fair dealing, we trust that this is the spirit which will animate our authorities. If, on the other hand, aliens in our midst have not become naturalised, then between the two stools they are bound to come to the ground, and they have only themselves to blame for their remissness or unwillingness.<sup>153</sup>

The Royal Academy of Music (RAM) took as moderate a line as possible. Content to keep on established staff, they were nonetheless obliged to require evidence of naturalisation. Professor Kastner, a harp teacher also on the staff of the GSM and a member of the Queen's Hall Orchestra, was found to be without naturalisation paperwork. In September 1914 he was retained on the staff whilst applying for his papers but as these were unforthcoming by May 1915, he was required (regretfully) to resign.<sup>154</sup> Despite having their hands tied in this way, there is evidence that at the RAM there was no policy of general anti-foreigner sentiment. One parent wrote in November 1916:

Sir, I am hoping that my daughter will enter her name as a candidate for the Metropolitan examination of the Royal Academy of Music in December next, but before making formal application I would be obliged if you would be kind enough to give me an assurance that she will not be examined by an alien, naturalised or otherwise.

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<sup>152</sup> London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) Press Cuttings of the GSM, CLA/056/AD/04/9.

<sup>153</sup> 'Comments: Dismissed Foreign Professors,' *MN*, 19/9/1914, 209.

<sup>154</sup> *RAM Minute Book*, 19/5/1915.

The Secretary was instructed to reply that they were ‘unable to entertain stipulations by intending candidates as to their selection of Examiners.’<sup>155</sup>

The GSM also had to follow official City of London policy with regard to German pianos. I do not propose to discuss this matter in detail here, as the subject of the wartime piano, the suspect re-labelling of German pianos as British, and the general trials, tribulations, prejudices, and missed opportunities of the British piano in wartime have been well documented in Cyril Ehrlich’s outstanding book, *The Piano: A History*.<sup>156</sup> The subject will arise again briefly below, in connection with pro-British attitudes.

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<sup>155</sup> *RAM Minute Book*, 8/11/1916.

<sup>156</sup> Ehrlich, *The Piano*. See also Materiality 3 above, with regard to the fate of the Bechstein piano company showroom and concert hall in London.

## Materiality 6 Wills's Cigarette Cards: Musical Celebrities (Second Series) 1914



Of the 50 cards in Wills' 1914 series of 'Musical Celebrities,' seven substitutions were made after war was declared. The first of each pair, German or Austrian, was replaced by a figure from an Allied nation.



The substitutions were inconsistent, however, as is demonstrated by the fact that Hallé, who had resided in Britain for the greater part of his life, greatly contributing to Manchester's music, was replaced, while Elena Gerhardt, a living German singer, was not. Neither were the Czech violinist Jan Kubelik, or the German composer Meyerbeer.

## 2.8 Conclusion

We have examined a variety of wartime attitudes towards Germany and German music. Broadly speaking, the published and visible contemporary reactions of those in the musical world fell into two crude but useful divisions – those ‘for’ German music, and those ‘against.’ By ‘for,’ I mean those commentators (in the music press and the national press in articles, from journalists and correspondents, in private diaries and letters) who saw no reason not to perform German music. By ‘against,’ I mean those who for various reasons, as we have seen, felt that the performance of German music was inappropriate.

The majority of commentators fell on the side of accepting the performance of German music. This contradicts many retrospective assumptions often made about excessively jingoistic attitudes during the Great War; it also contrasts with many attitudes towards Germany publicly expressed outside the musical sphere. Although there was a range of opinions and justifications within this general camp, most commentators maintained as their basic reason that music was predicated on ideas of universality. Great art had no nationality and was above political or military struggles.

It is possible to argue that such tolerance, rather than wisdom or maturity of outlook, denotes a practical recognition, that if one did not play German (or Austrian or Hungarian) music, one would find few audience members. Additionally, on a personal level, to abstain from German music would be a great personal sacrifice. For many people, German music *was* music. To play it ‘despite’ the war was simply to continue to believe in the classical canon, which was the foundation of the art-music tradition in Britain.

There is no doubt that the recognition of the draw of German music as a commercial tool for filling houses was a prime consideration, but the considerations were not merely monetary. Firstly, the employment opportunities for musicians, and the guarantee of paid work, were important practical considerations, especially at the outbreak of the war when the future of musical activity (and public concert life in particular) was very uncertain, a subject I discuss in chapter six.. Secondly,

the 'mission' of music, its purpose of national uplifting, sustaining and encouraging, the subject of chapter four, was a genuinely held belief: great music was widely held to be the possession of all and thus could benefit all. Lastly, motives are rarely clear cut: programming German music was far more than purely financial considerations or the continued performances of 'old favourites'. The common-sense recognition of the ill-advisability of banning the music that the public wanted to hear is therefore not incompatible with a more elevated understanding of the spiritual role of music, as well as a broad-minded view of music as above the confines of geo-political situations. As Lancelot of the *Referee* summed up:

Teutonic classics will be accepted, as they are now, because they emanated from a period before militarism was born and because they express the feelings common to humanity with superlative truth and force; but the German language is now so intimately associated in the minds of thousands with keen sorrow, bereavement and financial loss that it will not sound sweet in British ears for many years to come.<sup>157</sup>

There are deeper implications of these issues for our understanding of musical activity generally and the specific conditions of the First World War in Britain. The reactions to German music revealed deep-seated insecurities and questions which, already fermenting, were now out in the open: insecurities which related to the validity of musical activity, a topic to which I return in chapter four, and insecurities also over the validity of national music. Although the Boer Wars had received a great deal of coverage in the British press, there had been no recent armed conflict directly involving British citizens with their immediate European neighbours. Despite the regularity of military skirmishes in various parts of the extensive British Empire, the majority of Britons were simply no longer used to war. The war was a jolt to Britain in every imaginable way, but particularly commercially and culturally, two things which had a direct impact in the relationship with Germany. Furthermore, the early years of the twentieth century were, as we have noted above, a time when British music could look back over several decades of renewed vigour in the life of its own musical institutions, the foundation of new ones (such as the Royal College of Music in 1883) and greater success and recognition for many of its composers. Of course, all of this newfound confidence was still the subject of debate, as Vaughan Williams's articles from 1902 ('A School of English Music') and 1912 ('Who wants the English composer?')

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<sup>157</sup> Robin Legge, 'Matters Musical: Opportunity and Probability,' *Ref*, 6/12/1914, 5.

demonstrate.<sup>158</sup> Vaughan Williams stressed that composers (of whatever nationality) needed genuine self-expression, and to compose from a thorough grounding within their own community. The reality of war brought this home to many involved in music in England, and in a way that both disconcerted and rallied them, as I demonstrate below. The multiplicity of responses to Germany and to German music during the First World War were not only a product of their time but an indicator as to how attitudes might develop in the post-war era.

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<sup>158</sup> Both these articles may be found in David Manning's edited volume, *Vaughan Williams on Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 17-18 and 39-42. The same volume includes Vaughan Williams's 1931 introduction to W. H. Hadow's *English Music* (London: Longmans Green, 1930, vii-xiii), in which he notes that whether or not Britain may claim 'music as part of our national heritage' was still open for debate some thirteen years after the war's end, although he challenges the notion of the 'land without music.'

## Chapter Three: The Great War as Great Opportunity

German music – the contemplation as well as the performance of it – generated a variety of complex emotions during the war, as we have seen, causing musicians and commentators to formulate a position from which they might accept German music of the past without condoning the actions of Germany in the present. For many, this was part of a deeply held belief that music transcended national boundaries. But such views were not incompatible with a determination to make the very best music in one's own country, and the war was seen as an unusually opportune time for British music.

It is important to note that, in the context of British music seizing an opportunity provided by the war, as this chapter discusses, that Germany was only one of a number of foreign influences on British music. Whilst Germany had historically dominated orchestral music, it was Italy that had led in the field of opera, right back to the earliest days of opera in Britain. During the First World War, Italy was an ally and this perhaps explains why anti-foreign comments were for the most part reserved for Germany – Austria being often either ignored altogether or classified together with Germany – as seen in the previous chapter. It was not simply, then, from under a German shadow that some British musicians wished to emerge, although political alliances meant that music of the allies was given especial prominence.<sup>1</sup> From whichever nationality of music previously dominating the attention of British audiences, the war was seen as opening up the possibility of a change in attitude towards British music.

This notion of opportunity was widely commented on, from the beginning of the war, in the musical press. This chapter addresses these perceptions of the war as opportunity for British music in both positive and negative ways. The main part of

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<sup>1</sup> This was the case early on in the war with the playing of the national anthems of the allies at regular intervals, and also later on, as for example when a Festival of Italian Symphonic Music was organised by Isidore de Lara, in aid of the Italian Red Cross, in January 1918. America did not become Britain's ally until 1917; although musical life in America was commented on, it was seen as being influenced *by* Britain rather than the other way around.



this chapter discusses the varied ways in which the war was seen as a potential force for good in British music, but firstly, I examine some views of commentators for whom the rhetoric surrounding wartime promotion of British music was less than positive. Secondly, this chapter enquires in a general way into the wide public discourse around the positive opportunities for British music. Thirdly, it investigates the ways in which the war was seen specifically as a chance for native composers to gain a fairer hearing. Lastly, I look at the specific ways in which the war was regarded as an opportunity for British executant musicians, both on the concert platform and in the context of opera.

It is timely to remember that concerns about the development of British music were not new in 1914. The period 1914-1918 was not hermetically sealed, unrelated to currents already well established, and any examination of the cultural history of the period needs to avoid the temptation to see it as such. The rhetoric regarding the chance to encourage the growth and freedom of British music was not intrinsically new: it was simply that the war provided a fresh way of looking at things, a temporary suspension of the normal intercourse between nations, and a new perspective from which to see if change was desirable, or indeed possible.

The natural tendency to see the First World War as a landmark period heralding change, is of long standing: in 1929, wrote Mrs. Peel, no-one referred to a particular year, but spoke instead of 'before the war, during the war, after the war.'<sup>2</sup> This should not prevent us from considering the war as a part of the natural continuum of the development of Britain's history, with continuities that link it both to the pre- and post-war periods. Such continuities have already been recognised, perhaps slightly more readily within social and historical studies than within musicology or cultural history. Gerald DeGroot has argued, in clear challenge to Marwick's classic text on the social impact of the war, *The Deluge*, that 'The war was not a deluge which swept all before it, but at best a winter storm which swelled the rivers of change.'<sup>3</sup> I shall return to these points in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>2</sup> Peel, *How We Lived Then*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> DeGroot, *Blighty*, 291.

### 3.1 Cautionary Notes: Warnings Against Nationalistic Opportunism and Over-Confidence

Whilst there was a widespread rhetoric of confidence about the effect of the war on British music, as I examine below, there also existed a lesser but significant strand of concern about the potential for damage caused by those who would promote British music at all costs. Various commentators urged a cautious reaction to the changed conditions. Inevitably, the war had brought a good deal of readjustment to musical life. Initially, the derailment of the normal course of musical life meant that musicians were genuinely in fear of losing their livelihood, not least because many musicians relied on annual contracts renewed after the summer break each year: the timing of the war's outbreak thus left many in a peculiarly precarious position and exacerbated fears of musical disaster.<sup>4</sup> For all the elements of over-heated response that some of these understandable if unwarranted reactions to the war brought into being, there were commentators even in the early days of the war who suggested that it would be as well to exercise caution, either on practical or intellectual grounds, in their responses to the emergency.

An example of an attitude of practical caution was expressed in an article in *Queen* magazine. The writer was concerned that zeal for the native product might cause an unwelcome reaction to allied musicians, most especially Belgians, a topic which was raised by Warwick Evans as a potential danger, at a Queen's Hall meeting designed to protect the interests of the British composer:

It is to be hoped that misguided enthusiasm will not spoil the cause of British musicians. The apparently admirable sentiments, ideas, and plans to secure the long-delayed justice may have been dictated to a certain extent by the emotions, which, however useful in creating music, must be tempered by reason in matters of business. [...] At a time when the whole civilised world is rapt in admiration of gallant and honourable Belgium, it is inconceivable that Britons who are loosening their purse-strings with characteristic generosity on behalf of the distressed people of that country would refuse their musicians an engagement at a moderate fee. That British instrumentalists should no longer be down-trodden and subjected to unfair competition is by the merest justice, but they cannot expect to monopolise the whole musical world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is discussed further in chapter six.

<sup>5</sup> *Queen*, 24/10/1914, non-paginated cutting from Press Cuttings of the GSM, LMA, CLA/056/AD/04/9.

In April 1915, Ernest Newman was quoted as having said that ‘the musical public, in becoming Anti-German, has not become notably Pro-British,’<sup>6</sup> although the positive critical reception to many of the concerts which we will examine below might argue against this. Others agreed with him.<sup>7</sup> Ever unafraid to court controversy – ‘Mr Ernest Newman appears to be happiest when he is making people angry,’ noted the *Musical Herald*<sup>8</sup> – Newman was, as late in the war as June 1918, reminding readers that in his opinion, it was futile to pretend that British executant musicians were the equal of their continental counterparts.

Censuring right and left everything English, Mr. Ernest Newman says, ‘No patriot can lay his hand on his heart and honestly say he believes that our singers and players are on the whole the equal of those on the Continent.’<sup>9</sup>

Another issue that Newman discussed openly in the press was nationalism in British music. In this respect his long-standing position had consistently run counter to the majority view. In 1910, he had commented that:

No race produces its finest flowers of the soul, whether in art, science or philosophy, without plentiful fertilisation by the culture of other races. The self-contained and self-evolving great nation is a myth. One is almost tempted to say that ‘the Frenchman,’ ‘the German,’ ‘the Englishman,’ and all the rest of them are myths. Our good friends the nationalists and the folksong enthusiasts always seem to me to come to grief here. Before we begin to found a ‘national school of music,’ let us at least agree as to what the national characteristics are. Is there such a thing as ‘*the* Englishman’ [...] Nothing would be easier than to show in detail that there has hardly been a generation for the last six or seven hundred years in which the mental life of one of the nations has not been quickened by the other.’<sup>10</sup>

The war did not initially change his attitudes: he was cautioning in September 1914 against the dangers of political animosities and overt nationalistic isolationism harming music:

It is just possible that each of the great nations, swollen with vanity or blindly nursing a grievance, may build round itself a wall more impassable than exists at present; and if that happens music will have to wait another twenty years for the new flight that we have all lately felt to be imminent. The day has gone by when one country can build up a school in ignorance or contempt of what is going on in other countries; it will reject a

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Echoes of the Month,’ *MH*, 1/4/1916, 169.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Discussion on the Queen’s Hall Promenade Concerts,’ *MT*, 1/10/1918, 470. Chappells noted that pre-war all-British concerts had occasionally been cancelled for lack of support.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Editorials,’ *MH*, 1/11/1916, 376.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Mr Ernest Newman Says,’ *MH*, 1/6/1918, 172.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Newman, ‘Debussy on Nationality in Music,’ *MT*, 1/11/1910, 700-2.

foreign culture at its peril. We can only hope that the result of the war will not be a perpetuation of old racial hatreds and distrusts, but a new sense of the emotional solidarity of mankind. From that sense alone can the real music of the future be born.<sup>11</sup>

However noble Newman's words were at a time when, as we saw above, many were increasingly concerned with condemning anything German as 'Hunnish,' the war had an eventual impact on his views. His attitude changed, partially as a result of reported atrocities, and partially because of the bewildering number of casualties and war's increasing length. By the time of the composition of Elgar's setting of Binyon's poem 'The Fourth of August,' in 1917 (which, with 'For the Fallen,' and 'To Women,' Elgar set as *Spirit of England*, opus 80), Newman was moved to write:

For the first time in the lives of many of us we find ourselves indulging in a national hatred and not seeing any reason to be ashamed of it; for the hatred is not so much that of a mere enemy – England has always been able to admire an enemy – as that of an immoral something that has become for the first time in history incarnated as a whole nation, the quintessence indeed of all the qualities in man that man, as an individual, contemplates in himself with regret and shame. What makes our anger with Germany so terrible is that even in the moments when we have been treated almost beyond endurance, it is a cold, steel-like anger, – the anger one feels against some malevolent thing that is not quite human [...] It is because Elgar has risen, as no other composer has done, and as no mere beating of the traditional patriotic drum could do, to the full height of this sacredness of love and time-transcending righteousness of hatred, that I, for one, accept with gratitude the succession of works in which is so nobly expressed not only our love for our own, but our hatred, not indeed of Germany, but of the foul thing for which Germany has come to stand among the nations.<sup>12</sup>

This is at some remove from the 'emotional solidarity of mankind' that he had extolled in September 1914. Newman may have at the war's beginning cautioned against what Hughes and Stradling described as a 'retreat into "Little England,"'<sup>13</sup> but the years took their toll on his resolve. The language he uses here of 'indulging in a national hatred,' is both surprising for a man of Newman's intellectual calibre and yet perfectly commonplace at this stage of the war: Newman's attitudes were mild compared to entities like the Anti-German League, subsequently to become the British Empire Union – as DeGroot put it, 'yet another privately organised propaganda body, dedicated to spreading hatred of all things German' – which in 1918 produced a film advocating a permanent ban on trading with Germany even after the war, called *Once a Hun, Always a Hun*.<sup>14</sup> Despite this, however much

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<sup>11</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The War and the Future of Music,' *MT*, 1/9/1914, 571-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ernest Newman, 'Elgar's Fourth of August,' *MT*, 1/7/1917, 295. Note that the end of this extract from Newman's article revives the idea of the 'two Germanys' that we examined in chapter two.

<sup>13</sup> Hughes and Stradling, *English Musical Renaissance*, 84.

<sup>14</sup> See DeGroot, *Blighty*, 194.

Newman had grown to believe that Germany was degenerate as a nation, he did not fundamentally change his attitudes towards the perils of a narrowly nationalistic outlook in music, which he maintained was dangerous to real life and innovation in music.

Newman's opinion may also be seen as an example of belief in the past goodness inherent in German music – that presence of heroes as well as villains, healing draughts as well as poison, which we noted earlier: 'the foul thing that Germany has become' still leaves hope for the nobility of German character, implicit in German music of the past, beneath the surface.

In 1912, Newman had conducted an argument with Cecil Sharp about what he called 'the Folk Song Fallacy,' in the pages of the *English Review*.<sup>15</sup> Newman was sceptical about idealised, non-specific ideas of nationality in music, and found Sharp's arguments less than convincing, as John Francmanis summarises:

Ernest Newman [...] scorned Sharp's idealisation of the 'rustic taste of the past.' Sceptical as to whether 'high-sounding' terms like the 'national musical idiom' could be shown to have any meaning whatever in terms of 'concrete fact,' Newman found the whole theory of racial characteristics in music flawed to the 'very centre'. He concluded that Sharp had no clear ideas at all upon the question of nationality in music, but was 'merely trafficking in catchwords [and] pseudo-ideas'.<sup>16</sup>

Newman's views were widely disseminated at the time, and by October 1916, his thoughts on these matters were still common enough knowledge for Percy Scholes, in interviewing George Bernard Shaw for *The Music Student* on 'His Views on British Music in General,' to ask, 'I suppose you have read Ernest Newman's anti-nationalistic views?'<sup>17</sup> It was perhaps unfair to describe Newman as 'anti-nationalistic' when Newman had originally been writing specifically about folk music, in peacetime. As the preceding chapter has shown, the fact of being at war had given peacetime national rivalry and concepts of nationalism, musical or otherwise, an entirely different impetus.

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<sup>15</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The Folk-Song Fallacy,' *English Review*, 1/5/1912, 255-268, and 'The Folk-Song Fallacy: A Rejoinder,' *English Review*, 1/8/1912, 65-70. See John Francmanis, 'The "Folk-Song" Competition: An Aspect of the Search for an English National Music,' *Rural History* 11/2, 2000, 202 and 205, n.110.

<sup>16</sup> John Francmanis, 'National Music to National Redeemer: The Consolidation of a "Folk-Song" Construct in Edwardian England,' *Popular Music* 21/1, 2002, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Percy Scholes, 'A Talk with George Bernard Shaw,' *MStud*, 1/10/1916, 59.

Another and perhaps more controversial warning note came from the ever-provocative Thomas Beecham. In December 1914, Beecham was invited at short notice to address the annual meeting of the Royal Manchester College of Music (RMCM). An unusual place, perhaps, from which to attack the British system of music education, but that is precisely what Beecham did. Firstly he celebrated the wake-up call that the war had given the conservatoires. The *Manchester Guardian* reported Beecham as saying:

The war had been a great awakener. So far from being a misfortune, it had wrought a miracle. It had accomplished what he had been vainly attempting for years, the expulsion of all the accomplished foreigners [...] The younger generation [...] must not get it into their heads that, in order to profit by the opportunity that had been created by the revival of nationalism, they could simply wait for the prizes of the musical profession to fall into their laps.<sup>18</sup>

Beecham was also reported as describing the London conservatoires as ‘old-established, perfectly useless institutions,’ and called the GSM a ‘great bazaar’ whose graduates he knew would be untalented.<sup>19</sup> He then, as a conductor and entrepreneur who had had conspicuous success with opera, made an extraordinary claim:

In all the colleges and academies of this country there is not one great artist. Out of all the singers in England to-day I should have the greatest difficulty in getting together a second-rate opera company.<sup>20</sup>

This speech was widely reported in the national press and prompted much correspondence in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*. Beecham’s memory played him false as to the date of the speech: perhaps it also misled him as to the justification for his speech, looking back over some thirty years.<sup>21</sup> He claimed in his memoir that his express intent was to provoke ‘a lively interest’ and ‘a useful reaction,’ concerned as he was with standards of composition and performance in British musical life. In the early twentieth century, he claimed, any criticism of

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Mr Thomas Beecham: The Prospects of British Music,’ *MG*, 5/12/1914, 12.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Beecham dates the Manchester speech as the spring of 1915 (*Mingled Chime*, 199) although the *MG* reported the occasion in December 1914, see note 18 above.

British music was usually taken as 'gross disservice to art.'<sup>22</sup> He held that British musicians were severely self-delusional and he relished the chance in 1914 to provoke constructive discussion.<sup>23</sup> One can well imagine the atmosphere when he said, according to the report in the *Manchester Guardian*, that almost every singer walked on to a platform like 'a duck in a thunderstorm.'<sup>24</sup>

It is significant that the *Manchester Guardian* immediately identified that Beecham's main aim was 'great ambition for British music.'<sup>25</sup> Beecham was undoubtedly interested in positive critical and public reaction to British music both before and after the war, but the war provided the forum for such matters to take centre stage. Beecham, in subsequent correspondence in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, not only justified his speaking out by reminding readers that he was 'far and away the largest employer of musical labour in this country,' but referred to the opportunity to put one's house in order presented by the current conditions. 'We are now at a critical moment in our musical history; now is the time for an entire stocktaking of our position.'<sup>26</sup> In fact, it is surprising how little specifically the war features in these discussions: Beecham's 'critical moment in our musical history' might in fact be nothing at all to do with the war; the only specific reference he makes to the war after having described it as an 'awakening' was to say that his speech was not designed to criticise British musical education 'to create an idle diversion in these mournful times.'<sup>27</sup> Beecham's gift to British music was that it made the nation, as described in later years by David Cairns, as 'nationally and individually a more musically aware people because of him and what he gave us.'<sup>28</sup> His particular energies during the war years, his deliberate provocations included, formed part of his contribution to the rejuvenation of musical life in Britain, from

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<sup>22</sup> Beecham, *Mingled Chime*, 198.

<sup>23</sup> Bassoonist Archie Camden recalled that Beecham was happy to have been so provocative: 'He was enjoying the uproar he had created and sailed through the storm with exaggerated calm.' Camden, *Blow by Blow: The Memories of a Musical Rogue and Vagabond* (London: Thames, 1982), 80, quoted in Lucas, *Thomas Beecham*, 123. The *Manchester Guardian* noted that there was no reason to take the speech 'sourly,' rather that it was 'doubtless intended to provoke controversy' and 'manifestly intended to be as much invigorating as devastating.' 'Mr Beecham and Musical Academies,' *MG*, 7/12/1914, 6.

<sup>24</sup> 'Mr Thomas Beecham: The Prospects of British Music,' *MG*, 5/12/1914, 10.

<sup>25</sup> 'Mr Beecham and Musical Academies,' *MG*, 7/12/1914, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Beecham, 'Mr Thomas Beecham Returns to the Attack,' *MG*, 11/12/1914, 12.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Ronald Crichton and John Lucas, 'Beecham, Sir Thomas,' *Grove Music Online*, accessed 12/11/2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02507>.

before the war years and beyond the war's end.<sup>29</sup>

It was not only in public discourse that cautionary notes about the war and British music were sounded; in private the picture was occasionally far less rosy than the later parts of this chapter, with the description of improved recognition for British music on the concert platform, might indicate. One composer who found the war's effect on British music deeply disheartening was Henry Balfour Gardiner, who had done so much to publicise the works of British composers in his pre-war concert series. The presence of British music on programmes early in the war was for him a cause for depression, contrasting as it did with the lack of support that he felt he had received for his own efforts to promote British music in 1912 and 1913.<sup>30</sup> In 1915 he wrote to Percy Grainger, a close friend from Frankfurt days:

All the little busybodies are giving 'English Music' of a sort – the public must be disgusted with music of every description by now.<sup>31</sup>

For some, the presence of British music on concert programmes in greater quantities, was a cause for caution or even, as in Gardiner's case, for despondency. For the majority, it was a cause for celebration and discussion of the most advantageous ways to seize the moment. This awareness of the opportunities that the war provided became obvious in the public discourse of the time.

### 3.2 Public Discourse On the War as Opportunity

'The whole of our national life is in the melting pot,' wrote Stanford during the war, a melting-pot that was as often perceived to be potentially beneficial as much as disastrous.<sup>32</sup> The notion that war could be positively seen as a purgative was widespread outside musical circles:<sup>33</sup> it is no surprise therefore to find that music

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Lloyd, *H. Balfour Gardiner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 117.

<sup>31</sup> Letter quoted in Lloyd, *Balfour Gardiner*, 116.

<sup>32</sup> C. V. Stanford, quoted in 'Opinions,' *MH*, 1/6/1917, 175.

<sup>33</sup> Cambridge theologian John Oman called the war a 'cleansing fire,' quoted in Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany*, 77 and 259, n.17. This could be on a personal or a national, even global level. Edmund Gosse described war as a 'sovereign disinfectant' which would reveal the preoccupation of the leisured classes with comfort and convenience 'in their true guises as the spectres of national decay; and we have risen from the lethargy of our dilettantism to lay them, before it is too late, by the flashing of the unsheathed sword' (quoted in Hynes, *War Imagined*, 12).



was also expected to benefit from war. Musical journals took every opportunity to comment on the potential impact of the war on the musical world, as this example shows:

Undoubtedly war, supremely regrettable though it is, exercises a great cleansing power. It is a severe test of the character of the nation and of the individual. Emotions are deepened and crystallised, and the superficial and insincere in art disappears in consequence. Humanity will rise out of the *débâcle* cleaner and better than ever. Music as the most ideal of the arts will be in requisition more than ever. The best art will survive and grow; the superficial, tawdry and insincere will go under.<sup>34</sup>

Such lofty hopes (for music and for mankind) of a better future were destined to be subverted, as the history of the later twentieth century shows. However, for the duration of the war, this rhetoric of opportunity was often central to debates about music. Particularly prominent in early debates was the notion that British music now had the chance of liberation from the influence of Germany.

In October 1914, *Queen* magazine rejoiced that ‘the unjustifiable tyranny of the past now stands exposed. British musicians [...] are determined to find redress from their long-standing grievances.’<sup>35</sup> Such comment in *Queen* demonstrates the widespread interest in the topic: *Queen* was not a specialist musical or literary journal. This notion of ‘unjustifiable tyranny,’ the language of slavery, chimes with the notion of freedom from the ‘yoke’ of foreign, specifically German, oppression that runs through early wartime musical discourse. Some examples will illustrate this (emphases mine):

When Europe emerges from the melting pot, not the least important phase of the transition should be that British music has attained a triumphant position at home. The first step to that end is to fling off the *yoke* of German music.<sup>36</sup> (November 1914)

Those yet unborn, whose mission it will be to perpetuate British musical art, will, it is to be hoped, give healthy and artistic evidence that their forefathers slowly but surely thwarted the threatened barbaric *yoke* of modern Germany.<sup>37</sup> (June 1915)

We are in danger of substituting the *yoke* of a friendly for, at the moment, that of an unfriendly power.<sup>38</sup> (June 1916)

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<sup>34</sup> ‘War and the Arts of Peace,’ *MMR*, 1/9/14, 237.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Efforts in Wartime,’ *Queen*, 24/10/1914, non-paginated cutting from Press Cuttings of the GSM, LMA, CLA/056/AD/04/9.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Plea for British Music: The Obsession with Foreign Superiority,’ *MH*, 1/11/1914, 410.

<sup>37</sup> ‘The Effect of the War on British Music,’ *MH*, 1/6/1915, 250.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Kennedy Scott, ‘What of English Music?’ *MT*, 1/6/1916, 279.

Such language continued throughout the war: a 1918 comment described the preference for singing in German, an ‘uncouth’ language (a view we noted in the previous chapter) as ‘one of the greatest proofs of the yoke placed on us by the Huns.’<sup>39</sup>

It is as well to recall, however, that this claim of overwhelming and nefarious German domination was emotive rather than accurate. In the piano trade, wartime rhetoric enabled all failings of the trade to be blamed on Germany, a claim supported by the research of Cyril Ehrlich:

It became an article of faith that German manufacturers, ‘mere copyists’, had advanced ‘the Kultur of the Hun’ through unscrupulous commerce backed by immigrant German professors; even that the ‘tubby German tone’ of meretricious instruments had been foisted upon a ‘Prussianized’ English public rendered deaf to the English piano which, through its ‘superior delicacy, solidity and workmanship’ could now take its rightful place.<sup>40</sup>

Wishing to re-educate public taste, so that it was no longer a matter of faith that a foreign name was a guarantee of ability or success, was quite a different matter to these sweeping accusations of deliberate enslavement.

Dan Godfrey was renowned as a champion of British music.<sup>41</sup> In his memoir, he claimed that although there had been increased confidence amongst British musicians since about 1880, ‘a certain national flavour had been lacking.’<sup>42</sup> What really changed matters, Godfrey maintained, was the war:

The field was sown with good seed, but it was a European upheaval that caused the field to become fertile. Recognition for British music was won at the cost of thousands of lives and millions of money. I, who have been in very close touch with British music for a number of years – longer perhaps than any of my contemporaries – can [...] utter the conviction that it was the Great War that drew attention to British music.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> ‘Britannia, Rule the Staves,’ *Ref*, 15/9/1918, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Ehrlich, *The Piano*, 162-3. In Ehrlich’s account, the piano industry was rife with ‘shabby, vituperative Jingoism’ (159) and ‘crass rhetoric,’ (160) but this was largely found in the pages of *The Pianomaker*, a trade publication founded just before the war which had anti-German attitudes as its raison d’être, based on commercial interests. It was closer to Horatio Bottomley and *John Bull* than to any of the mainstream music journals; to take its attitudes as somehow representative of the musical world gives a distorted impression.

<sup>41</sup> Godfrey was honoured in 1911 with a dinner in London at which many well-known musicians had gathered, to acknowledge that he had ‘upheld persistently and courageously the banner of English music.’ ‘Dinner to Mr Dan Godfrey,’ *MT*, 1/6/1911, 394-5.

<sup>42</sup> Dan Godfrey, *Music and Memories: Thirty-five Years of Conducting* (London: Hutchinson, 1924), 135.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, 137-8.

Godfrey went on to link the lack of attention to British music explicitly with over-dependence on German music. It is undoubtedly true that the two factors – long delight in foreign music and neglect of native music – are interrelated. However, Godfrey oversimplifies, implying that only the war caused concern over German influence. In fact, as we saw above, this had been a matter of concern for decades before the war. The war inevitably created an urgency around the question since suddenly ‘German’ influence had become ‘enemy’ influence.<sup>44</sup> Despite the exaggeration of Godfrey’s claim – that British music only won recognition *because* of the war – the core of his argument is sound: there was a significant increase in the amount of British music programmed during the war, as we will see below.

The war’s implications for British music were widely discussed, as shown by the reporting of two 1914 meetings, convened by Hubert Bath, addressing both the place of ‘enemy’ musicians still employed in Britain, and how to support British musicians. Sir Frederic Cowen chaired both meetings,<sup>45</sup> which aimed ‘to deal with the question of the “alien enemy” in the musical ranks and the upholding of British interests in music.’<sup>46</sup>

Much of the reporting of the meetings concentrated on the rehashing of old grievances about foreign musicians and British performers using foreign names to secure employment.<sup>47</sup> Cowen encouraged those present to consider (constructively) how wartime conditions might benefit British music, but at the meetings, partly born from anger at the continued presence of enemy aliens in orchestral and band ranks, it proved difficult to retain Cowen’s desired calm detachment. However, many agreed that dwelling on past problems was unhelpful, especially as many of the so-called Hungarian and Viennese bands which had had priority of booking at

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<sup>44</sup> Hynes, *War Imagined*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> Cowen’s fame was found early on as pianist and composer, but in latter years he was better known as a conductor.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Music,’ *Observer*, 11/10/1914, 5.

<sup>47</sup> For example, ‘The Case of the Alien Musician,’ *Observer*, 4/10/1914, 5; ‘Matters Musical: Patriotism and Art,’ *Ref*, 4/10/1914, 7; ‘The War and Musicians’ Interest,’ *MH*, 1/11/1914, 403; ‘The Position of British Musicians: Meeting at Queen’s Hall,’ *MT*, 1/11/1914, 657; ‘To Protect British Musicians,’ *Times*, 14/10/1914, 10.

social functions, consisted of British musicians.<sup>48</sup>

The imagined superiority of foreign bands was, the meeting hoped, to be a welcome casualty of the war, although some noted that 'Hungarian' and 'Viennese' bands had simply renamed themselves 'Belgian.' The desire for a performer with a foreign name was entrenched:

Recently a lady asked [Mr. Austin] to recommend a teacher for her daughter. On going through a list, he suggested the name of a teacher who was fairly well known. But the lady said: 'Don't you think it would be better if I had one of these with a foreign name? It sounds so much better.'<sup>49</sup>

The meetings, as reported in the *Observer*, had 'the object of taking steps to free the ranks of executive musicians in England from unnecessary foreign elements'.<sup>50</sup> Cowen spoke more reasonably than this aim might imply: he stressed that 'there was no question of tabooing good music, from whatever source it might arrive, nor was there any suggestion of interference with foreign artists fulfilling engagements in England.'<sup>51</sup>

One factor that few were prepared to confront directly was the fear that livelihoods would be threatened not by *enemy* aliens but by *allied* ones, most particularly Belgian refugees. Cellist Warwick Evans<sup>52</sup> pointed out that even though enemy musicians employed in Lyons establishments had been dismissed, they were replaced with Belgian musicians:

He would willingly give money and goods to a Belgian refugee, but he would not give his livelihood. [He] was giving expression to the fear which is the hearts of the rank and file of poor musicians at the moment.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 'To Protect British Musicians,' *Times*, 14/10/1914, 10. Many British players had become accustomed to wearing 'foreign' uniforms and being required to refrain from speaking English: see Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Patriotism and Art,' *Ref*, 4/10/14, 7.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Position of British Musicians: Meeting at Queen's Hall,' *MT*, 1/11/1914, 657-9.

<sup>50</sup> 'The Case of the Alien Musician,' *Observer*, 4/10/1914, 5.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Principal cellist of the Queen's Hall Orchestra.

<sup>53</sup> 'To Protect British Musicians; New Association Formed,' *Times*, 14/10/1914, 10. The nature of the concern over Belgian musicians taking British jobs caused Flemish author Prayon Van Zuylen to write to the *Globe* on 5/10/1914 accusing the British of ingratitude for Belgian sacrifices and cowardice at being more interested in making a living rather than joining the armed forces (A. Prayon Van Zuylen, 'Letter from a Plain Englishman,' *Globe*, 5/10/1914, non-paginated cutting from Press Cuttings of the GSM, LMA, CLA/056/AD/04/9. Van Zuylen's impression, understandable from some of the reporting, was not correct: many orchestras, particularly Dan Godfrey's

The grievances were presented as very real in the press: the *Musical Herald* for example reported that ‘An English firm of caterers were employing nine German and Austrian musicians in their restaurants and at the same time inviting their English staff to go to war.’<sup>54</sup> However, accuracy in reporting is ever a potential difficulty challenging any reliance on newspaper reports and in this instance the most we can assume is that certain people felt, correctly or incorrectly, that there was a problem. We can thus conclude from press reports that these things were of concern to some people, and of significant enough import to public commentators to include them in their reporting, even if we cannot conclude whether such complaints were based on accurate or inaccurate factual bases. The report in the *Musical Times* focused less on negative grievances and highlighted a forward-looking attitude devoted to assisting the British musician in the future. The General Secretary of the Amalgamated Musicians’ Union, Mr. Williams, stressed that this was a long-term goal, not simply ‘while the war fever was going on. The matter was one for the future of the British musician.’<sup>55</sup>

What emerges most clearly from Williams’ comments is a point central to my thesis, and one that bears repeating:

He hoped that the profession would now seize the opportunity. It was an opportunity that they had never had before, and he prayed God that they might never again have to use such an event as a devastating war in order to bring the British musician into his own.<sup>56</sup>

This quotation exemplifies the complexity of feelings relating to the war. It sounds

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Bournemouth orchestras, did employ Belgian musicians, and the majority of commentators at the meeting felt that any boycott of foreign and especially Belgian musicians would be unwise.

<sup>54</sup> ‘The War and Musicians’ Interests,’ *MH*, 1/11/1914, 403. The *Herald* article took the form of a very brief summary of who said what, in contrast to the report in the *Musical Times*. While the *Herald* gives a clear idea of conflicting opinions of those present at the meeting, and highlights the preoccupation of many present with the redressing past grievances, the *Musical Times* takes a more serious view and plays down the obvious conflicts. This highlights the importance of looking at multiple sources in cultural history of this kind. To rely only on widely available digital resources without comparison of various journals prevents the more complex picture from appearing.

<sup>55</sup> ‘The Position of British Musicians: Meeting at Queen’s Hall,’ *MT*, 1/11/1914, 658. Williams was, however, apparently in two minds about foreign musicians. He stressed that whilst any action to prevent friendly aliens, particularly Belgians, playing alongside British players would not meet with public support, enemy-born musicians were another matter. He stressed that the union would take strong and determined action against enemy aliens playing in British orchestras and bands. The union included players who had been naturalised, ‘because there was a strong feeling that the leopard could not change its spots,’ *ibid.*, 657.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, 658.

unfeeling, even callous, when commentators like Stanford remark that war would give England ‘the chance of her life’. However, Williams and others also stress that the war is undoubtedly a terrible thing. The terribleness of war is what later commentators see before all else, and rightly so; however, as I discussed in chapter one, this has a tendency to blind us to what was in reality a very complex time politically and socially. Here concern for livelihoods and national pride in music intermingle with attitudes on a spectrum from outright xenophobia to compassionate understanding.

The meeting aimed ‘to form a representative committee to devise means to ameliorate in every possible way the position of the British musician,’<sup>57</sup> although Corder warned that in trying to unify disparate branches of the musical profession (bandsmen and composers, for example, the latter themselves divided into ‘commercial’ and ‘artistic’ types), the meeting was trying to ‘bite off more than they could chew.’ Warwick Evans wanted the meeting to organise a means of standing up for the native musicians, ‘who were the root of music in England and for whom nothing was done.’<sup>58</sup> The meeting ultimately resolved to form ‘a National Association for the protection of British interests in music.’<sup>59</sup> All of this discussion, however, came to little practically. A year after the meeting, a writer in the *Daily Telegraph* claimed he was unable to answer those who wished to know the outcome of the ‘historic’ meeting held a year previously.<sup>60</sup>

### 3.2.1 Musicians’ Discussion on the War’s Potential Effects on Music

In mid-1915 the *Musical Herald* solicited musicians’ answers to the question, ‘What will be the effect of the war on British music?’ Their survey provides a convenient snapshot of the variety of views coexisting at the time. Some, like Hubert Bath, confidently asserted that the war’s effect was ‘bound to be a good one.’<sup>61</sup> Generally, however, opinions varied. A minority thought the war would make little difference to music:

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, 657-9.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, 659.

<sup>60</sup> Robin Legge, ‘Music of the Day,’ *DT*, 21/9/1915, 6.

<sup>61</sup> ‘The Effect of the War on British Music,’ *MH*, 1/6/1915, 250.

I cannot see that the War can affect British music greatly one way or the other. Neither performers nor audience will, I think, demand music because it is British, or dispense with it because it is German. Music has no geographical limitations. The demand for British music must depend on the quality, not the quantity provided.<sup>62</sup>

Printed immediately below this in the *Herald* article were the comments from Bath:

There is no doubt whatever that this war will have a very great effect upon music in this country, as elsewhere, and upon British music in particular.<sup>63</sup>

Bath was confident that the war would allow ‘excellent and talented British artists, instrumentalists, and singers [to] come into their own,’ and neutralise the ‘Hunnish musical poison.’ (It is interesting to note the terminology of war which appears liberally throughout Bath’s prose here, and is a feature of much musical discourse as the war progressed, with the use of military metaphors quite common: Bath calls Richard Strauss a ‘musical Howitzer,’ and German influence a ‘poisonous musical gas’.)

Some held contradictory attitudes to foreign influences. Arguing on the one hand that art was international and that a cosmopolitan outlook had been Britain’s strength, a Liverpool organist (Herbert Ellingford) nevertheless bemoaned the ‘threatened barbaric yoke of modern Germany.’ Future generations would carry out their ‘mission [...] to perpetuate British musical art.’ This ‘missionary’ imagery may be seen in the longstanding language of religious and even Messianic metaphors relating to British music: in 1901, the *Musical Standard* had looked to a time ‘when our genius shall have come’.<sup>64</sup> During the war, this language continued: Harry Farjeon noted in 1915 that ‘our country is full of signs that the awakening is coming.’<sup>65</sup> ‘We persuaded ourselves that [...] Handel was our Messiah, and Mendelssohn our true prophet,’ noted Charles Kennedy Scott, reflecting on ‘What

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<sup>62</sup> Comment from F. Bates, organist of Norwich Cathedral, *ibid*. We examined the question of whether or not German music should be banned in chapter two; Bates’ point about any potential demand for British music being dependent on quality not quantity is a point discussed below in the discussion of opportunities for British composers.

<sup>63</sup> All the quotes from this article are from ‘The Effect of the War on British Music,’ *MH*, 1/6/1915, 250, as above. Although the juxtaposition of two such opposing views as Bath’s and Bates’s makes for stimulating reading, the responses are in fact arranged in alphabetical order of contributor; the contrast between is thus happy journalistic coincidence.

<sup>64</sup> C. Fred Kenyon, ‘Wanted: An English School of Music,’ *MS*, 12/01/1901, 27-8.

<sup>65</sup> Harry Farjeon, ‘A National School of British Composers,’ *MH*, 1/8/1915, 348-352.

of English Music?’ in the *Musical Times* of June 1916.<sup>66</sup> Needing ‘salvation’ gave a sense of urgency: Kennedy Scott also noted, ‘The time is propitious, and must be taken by the forelock.’ This urgency is key in the discourse around the chance for British music that the war represented.

Using the circumstances of war to connect national pride and music was a common theme throughout the war. In April 1917, Ernest Austin, in a preface to his ‘Twelve Tunes for Young Musicians,’ wrote: ‘the war has taught us that we have every reason to be proud of our country.’ He advised children to ‘form the habit of loving the music of [their] country’ in order to build ‘a great and romantic revival of British music’.<sup>67</sup> Such an appeal in wartime reaffirms the fact that music was perceived to have a central role to play: it was a part of the war effort, as we will see below. Austin was perhaps partially prompted by awareness of the Associated Board of the Royals Schools of Music examination syllabi, which still maintained a high proportion of non-British works, right to the end of the war. The 1918 syllabus had, according to the *Musical Times*, a mere nineteen British pieces set, compared to a total of fifty-three by foreign composers.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.3 Opportunities for British Music on the Concert Platform<sup>69</sup>

In June 1915, the *Monthly Musical Record* noted that:

Undoubtedly the most significant feature of the month has been the prominence given to BRITISH music, and everyone will hope that this reawakening may be the precursor of a still more widespread campaign.<sup>70</sup>

The interest in British music during wartime was part of a continuum with pre-war attempts at all-British concerts. Many different schemes had sought to promote British music, but were not universally popular, despite a usually cordial critical reception. Bax recalled that ‘the decade between 1904 and the beginning of the Great War saw an awakening of interest in and patronage of native music such as

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<sup>66</sup> Charles Kennedy Scott, ‘What of English Music?’ *MT*, 1/6/1916, 279. Kennedy Scott’s placing of the nineteenth-century composer as prophet of one born in the seventeenth is lacking in logic, although he was presumably using these composers’ names as signifiers of the public’s following of ‘false gods,’ as he puts it in the same article.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Editorials,’ *MH*, 1/4/1917, 112.

<sup>68</sup> ‘What are Academies and the Powerful Examining Bodies Doing?’ *MT*, 1/1/1918, 10-11.

<sup>69</sup> This section concentrates on concert-hall music; opera will be discussed separately below.

<sup>70</sup> ‘In the Concert Room,’ *MMR*, 1/5/1915, 167.



had never occurred before.<sup>71</sup> Although a 1910 all-British concert in Bournemouth had received glowing reviews,<sup>72</sup> such was not always the case; after a 1913 Philharmonic concert, one critic opined that ‘the public does not want British music at any price’: the only acceptable forms of British music, concluded the critic, were the ‘playfulnesses,’ such as Grainger’s ‘Mock Morrises’ and Gardiner’s ‘Shepherd Fennel’s Dance,’ when inserted as diversions into programmes containing Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Grieg.<sup>73</sup>

Despite these reservations, however, there had been various musicians committed to putting on concerts of British music. Joseph Holbrooke and Thomas Dunhill had been organising chamber concerts of pieces by British composers since the early part of the century and other initiatives included Balfour Gardiner’s 1912 and 1913 series, as well as Edward Mason’s concerts with his eponymous choir.<sup>74</sup> Gardiner’s concerts were well received, although he found the experience trying.<sup>75</sup> More often than not these events attracted comment in the press, perhaps precisely because they were unusual events. Some commentators, such as Henry Wood, argued strongly that to hold *only* British concerts was in fact counterproductive for British music, as we will see below.

There was thus already an increased interest in promoting the native composer pre-

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<sup>71</sup> Arnold Bax, *Farewell My Youth* (London: Longmans Green, 1943), 88.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Music at the Bournemouth Centenary Fêtes,’ *MT*, 1/8/1910, 528: ‘At the all-British concert the following works were done, the living composers conducting their own: Sullivan’s *Macbeth Overture* (1888), Parry’s *Characteristic Variations* (1897), Mackenzie’s *Burns Rhapsody* (1881), Stanford’s *Irish Rhapsody* (1902), Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance March in D*, and second *Wand of Youth Suite* (1908), Edward German’s *Welsh Rhapsody* (1904). No such complete representation of our leading orchestral composers has before been offered in a single concert. That a tightly-packed house should be drawn by these names, should listen in absorbed silence, and should rapturously applaud every item, is a sign of the times, as well as a tribute to the education received by the Winter Gardens audiences through the daily Municipal Orchestra.’

<sup>73</sup> ‘British Art and British Audiences,’ *Observer*, 23/11/1913, 5.

<sup>74</sup> David Dunhill, *Thomas Dunhill: Maker of Music* (London: Thames, 1997). Edward Mason, principal cellist with the New Symphony Orchestra at one time and assistant music-master at Eton, had founded in 1908 a choir especially to promote choral works by British composers. He was killed in May 1915 fighting on the Western Front, aged 37. For Balfour Gardiner, see Lloyd, *Gardiner*, 82-3.

<sup>75</sup> See Lloyd, *Gardiner*, ‘“Oriana will sing for me:” 1912–1913,’ 80-98, which details both the positive feelings amongst composers that something very important was happening, facilitated by Gardiner and capturing the zeitgeist (see Kennedy Scott’s comments on 86 for example) and the personal frustration that Gardiner felt at dealing with what he saw as truculent and uncooperative British orchestral players (97-98.) Lloyd also gives the programmes on 242-245.

1914. And in fact the renewal of interest in native compositional talent which occurred at the very end of the nineteenth century was in its turn a recurrence of a debate that had been very much alive in the early part of that century. Examining the rhetoric surrounding the British composer's opportunity for expression and fear of domination by the foreigner, one is struck by the familiarity of the comments. Simon McVeigh has detailed several of the nineteenth-century schemes which aimed to address these very same issues, and the language used to describe what was perceived as the plight of the British composer could as easily have been produced either in the re-flourishing of interest in the native tradition at around the time of the foundation of the Royal College of Music, or indeed during the war itself. For example, the Society of British Musicians was founded in the 1830s to give 'the same advantages enjoyed by the composers of foreign countries.'<sup>76</sup> As McVeigh notes, the press of the day thought that 'the downtrodden British musician needed rescuing from obscurity' and that

an abundant native talent was withering away for lack of patronage [...] The national genius remained latent, awaiting the nurture of encouragement and education.<sup>77</sup>

This demonstrates the cyclical nature of the trope of the neglected British composer. However, it was a topic given new life by the war.

For some, this was expressed in a particularly passionate way. Isidore de Lara, a British composer who had resided in France for several decades before the war, made a heartfelt plea for British music not to waste the opportunity of the war:<sup>78</sup>

The war has come, and to-day the shadow of the wings of the Angel of Death seems to hide from our view all things of beauty and all visions of art. And yet, through the universal gloom, the faint blush of a new morn is visible to those whose eyes have learnt to pierce the darkness. Is this the dawn of the renaissance [*à*] of English music? Will the ruthless behaviour, the Philosophy of Frightfulness of the professors of 'Kultur' not cause the younger generation of composers to turn away for a time from all things German and seek inspiration in the old music of Britain, wherein Byrd, Tallis, Morley, Purcell and Arne have crystallised the deep sentiment and the buoyant cheerfulness of the British nation. [...] We have every right then to expect the young

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<sup>76</sup> Simon McVeigh, 'The Society of British Musicians (1834–1865) and the Campaign for Native Talent,' in *Music and British Culture, 1785–1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*, ed. Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 149–150.

<sup>77</sup> McVeigh, 'Society of British Musicians,' 149.

<sup>78</sup> De Lara is considered in more detail below.

English composer of to-day to rid himself once and for ever of the sway of the musical 'formulae' adopted by the composer of Germany. [...] The future belongs to the young hero [...] who will [...] draw from the depths of his own being tone pictures of all that is beautiful in the wonderful poetry of Great Britain and find the vigorous rhythms that will tell of the dauntless spirit of those who go to death singing 'Tipperary.'<sup>79</sup>

Although exaggerated for dramatic effect, this high-flown rhetoric can be found (in less hyperbolic terms) expressed in much of the wartime musical discourse, reiterating the point that the opportunity created by the war should be seized. In the previous chapter, we noted de Lara's comment that British musicians had been under the hypnotic sway of German music. Here we see the converse of that view: freedom from the paralysing effect of German influence should benefit the British musician, encourage British native talent, and increase audience appreciation.

De Lara backed up his rhetoric with practical steps. His scheme, the War Emergency Entertainments, was of such stature and importance that it deserves its own investigation, and will be covered in more detail in chapter six. One part of his scheme must be considered here, however, and this is a series of three orchestral concerts of British music that de Lara organised in 1915.

These concerts were generously guaranteed by Lord Burnham, of the *Daily Telegraph*, and financier Sir Francis Trippell. Trippell viewed the extension of de Lara's weekly 'All-British' concerts onto a larger stage as 'a matter of national importance.'<sup>80</sup> A guarantee fund was a financial necessity because 'the public in London, with very few exceptions, were inclined to boycott British music,' as de Lara told Trippell on first mooted the scheme.<sup>81</sup> Trippell's involvement caused concern in some quarters, as he was German-born, although long naturalised. The Anti-German League<sup>82</sup> attempted to persuade de Lara to give up the money from Trippell, but he:

did not intend depriving British composers of the opportunity of being heard under favourable conditions, and [...] considered it exceedingly patriotic to take any money for the propaganda of British music [...] even if it came from Germany!<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Isidore de Lara, 'English Music and German Masters,' *FR*, 1/5/1915, 853.

<sup>80</sup> 'British Composers Important Offer by Sir Francis Trippell,' *DT*, 19/2/1915, 11.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Panayi, *Enemy*, 207-9.

<sup>83</sup> Isidore de Lara, *Many Tales of Many Cities* (London: Hutchinson, 1928), 256.

The first orchestral concert of the scheme was given on 29 April 1915, with Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra.<sup>84</sup> To ensure popular support, de Lara invited well-known French actress Réjane to recite Elgar's setting of Cammaerts' poem *Carillon*.<sup>85</sup> *Carillon*, wrote the *Musical Times*, was 'undoubtedly the feature of the concert, the great actress's intensely-emotional delivery evoking a great outburst of enthusiasm from the large audience.'<sup>86</sup> The *Observer* went even further: 'The recitation by Mme. Réjane of Mr. Cammaerts's "Carillon," with Elgar's music, was one of the most thrilling of recent occurrences on any concert stage.'<sup>87</sup> Two further concerts also saw capacity audiences, with a repeat of *Carillon* on each occasion. Other works included music by Frank Bridge, Joseph Holbrooke, Ethel Smyth and Stanford amongst others.<sup>88</sup> The fact that the concerts were both publicly and critically well received was a striking endorsement for de Lara, especially if one recalls that they were run close to the time of other series which struggled to attract audiences. In fact, the *Music Student* critic had the unusual experience of difficulty in finding a good seat at the first of de Lara's concerts.<sup>89</sup>

De Lara was not alone in the large-scale promotion of British music at this time. A *Times* article entitled 'The British Music Campaign' gives the somewhat misleading impression of a concerted project, but the various enterprises that took place in the spring of 1915 were independently organised. There was a real if coincidental focus on British orchestral music in 1915. In addition to de Lara's series, there was a series of three orchestral concerts designated a 'Festival of British music,'

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<sup>84</sup> The programme consisted of Holbrooke, *Queen Mab* (Scherzo); Dale, *Suite for Viola and Orchestra* (slow movement); Vaughan Williams, *First Norfolk Rhapsody*; Mackenzie, *Overture 'Britannia'*; German, *Valze gracieuse*; Goossens, *Symphonic Prelude*; Balfour Gardiner, *Shepherd Fennel's Dance*; Cowen, *Butterflies' Ball Overture*; Goring Thomas, *Aria from Nadezhda*; Elgar, *Carillon*.

<sup>85</sup> For an examination of Elgar's setting of Belgian poet Cammaerts' work, including *Carillon*, see Foreman, 'A Voice in the Desert: Elgar's War Music,' 263-285, in Foreman ed., *Oh, My Horses!*, especially 267-279.

<sup>86</sup> 'London Concerts: Orchestral Concerts of British Music,' *MT*, 1/6/1915, 363-364.

<sup>87</sup> 'Concert of British Music,' *Observer*, 2/5/1915, 7.

<sup>88</sup> The programme of the second concert, in addition to *Carillon* included: A first performance of Joseph Holbrooke's orchestral variations on *Auld Lang Syne*; George Clutsam (Suite 'The Pool'); Frank Bridge ('Isabella,' tone poem); Frederic Cliffe (*Coronation March*); Ethel Smyth (Prelude to Act 2 of *The Wreckers*); Percy Grainger (*Shepherd's Hey*), and songs by Quilter. In the third concert, Stanford's Concert Variations on an English Theme, for Piano and Orchestra, 'Down Among the Dead Men' were played with Solomon as soloist, and there was more Mackenzie, more Edward German, a new *Suite de Ballet* by Percy Pitt and more songs, including one by Rutland Boughton.

<sup>89</sup> 'British Concerts,' *MStu*d, 1/6/1915, 191.

organised by Emil Mlynarski.<sup>90</sup> Mlynarski, from Poland, had devised the series to recognise the hospitality he felt that he had been shown by the British public.<sup>91</sup> Mlynarski, Beecham, Elgar and Arthur Fagge shared the conducting of the concerts. An example of orchestral programming for the Festival of British Music concert on 15 May 1915 – a concert which the *Observer* complimented for its varied programme and described as having ‘capital attendance’ – may be seen at figure 4 below:

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<sup>90</sup> Mlynarski had been the conductor of the Glasgow-based Scottish Orchestra since 1910 and was the stimulus for Elgar’s *Polonia*: see Bird, ‘An Elgarian Wartime Chronology,’ 399. On Elgar’s *Polonia* generally, Joseph A. Herter, ‘Solidarity and Poland: Elgar’s Opus 76,’ in Foreman ed., *Ob My Horses!* 327-345. For a biographical sketch of Mlynarski see ‘Emil Mlynarski,’ *MT*, 1/5/1915, 265-68.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Festival of British Music,’ *Observer*, 9/5/1915, 6.

**The London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall May 15 1915 at 3.pm**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Frederic Austin  | Rhapsody <i>Spring</i>   |
| Percy Pitt       | Songs – <i>Chanson de Bilitis, Mandoline, Au Jardin de l'Infante</i><br>Soloist: Mme Kirkby Lunn |
| Cyril Scott      | Pianoforte Concerto (first performance), soloist: Cyril Scott                                    |
| Vaughan Williams | Symphonic Impression <i>In the Fen-Country</i>   |
| Elgar            | Introduction and Allegro for Strings   |
| Bax              | Song – <i>A Celtic Lullaby</i>   |
| McEwen           | Song – <i>The Wood's Aglow</i>   |
| Bantock          | Song – <i>Muse of the Golden Throne</i><br>Soloist: Madame Kirkby Lunn                           |
| Bax              | Fantasy <i>In the Faery Hills</i>  |
| Elgar            | March <i>Pomp and Circumstance</i> No. 3   |

**Figure 4 Programme for the third concert in the *Festival of British Music* 1915**

This festival was not specifically designed to introduce new British pieces, although Cyril Scott's first Piano Concerto was premièred under Beecham at the last concert. Instead, it was designed to reacquaint audiences with already successful pieces, to remind them of 'the best and most characteristic' of British music from previous decades, including Bantock, Holbrooke, Stanford, Wallace, Elgar, Vaughan Williams. The *Times* critic felt that the programming balance of would be liable to please an audience, in its mix of familiar and new.<sup>92</sup> Mlynarski felt that much fine British music was unknown in continental Europe, and that even in Britain, there was little opportunity for foreigners to become familiar with it: his festival was designed to remedy this.<sup>93</sup>

What was the public reaction to such efforts? In April 1915, the *Times* felt that the proposed programmes were an improvement on previous schemes where the audience 'have been asked to listen to long programmes in which there was not a

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<sup>92</sup> 'The British Music Campaign: Neglected Classics,' *Times*, 24/4/1915, 11.

<sup>93</sup> He proposed that the programmes should be published in book form with composer biographies, and sent to 'every town in Europe and America where symphonic music is cultivated,' an interesting scheme, as far as I know never carried out. 'Emil Mlynarski,' *MT*, 1/5/1915, 268.

single work which they knew they were certain to enjoy.<sup>94</sup> In this respect, the Mlynarski and de Lara concerts were seen to be a form of progress. This attitude towards what the audience might enjoy is, of course, something in the mind of the critic, and reveals more about what preconceptions a critic has about taste and about audience preferences. We can see in this something of the critic's own judgements about the appeal of certain contemporary pieces, in this case British contemporary music which, in his opinion, failed to please audiences. Whilst this could be seen as the critic taking upon himself the role of arbiter of taste, we should also recall that critics were experienced at taking the temperature of an audience, and the pleasure of the critic, therefore, at developments during the war can also be interpreted as a reading of audience reaction that showed the changes in programming and the experiments in British music were welcome.

In addition to the critic's approval of programming developments, however, he was concerned at the growing habit of concert givers to include an address to their audience, a strategy that many promoters of British music concerts, for example de Lara and Holbrooke, seemed to feel was obligatory. In de Lara's weekly series of British chamber concerts during the war, which will be examined below, he or an invited speaker always addressed the audience. Such speeches had clearly become the norm:<sup>95</sup>

Mr De Lara has adopted the fashion of preaching to those who do come to hear [British music] about the wickedness of those who do not.<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps war conditions encouraged this trend: the *Times* noted apprehensively that 'Mr. Holbrooke is going to follow his example and turn the concert platform into a rostrum "for a few minutes" at each of his concerts.'<sup>97</sup> This, the writer felt, was a temptation Holbrooke might resist by recalling that the job of the artists is to give pleasure to his audience. It is noteworthy that at this juncture of the war, pleasing an audience and British music are not necessarily seen as incompatible, in stark contrast to the 1913 remark we noted above, which claimed the public 'did not

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<sup>94</sup> 'The British Music Campaign: Neglected Classics,' *Times*, 24/4/1915, 11.

<sup>95</sup> 'London Concerts,' *MN*, 29/11/1915, 500; 'London Concerts,' *MN*, 25/12/1915, 597. In his memoir, de Lara recalled that he 'made a speech nearly every Thursday,' but also that, when absent, various people stood in for him, including musical commentators such as Percy Scholes, Edwin Evans, and celebrated barrister Sir Edward Marshall Hall (*Many Tales*, 257).

<sup>96</sup> 'The British Music Campaign: Neglected Classics,' *Times*, 24/4/1915, 11.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

want British music at any price;’ evidence that, at least at this stage of the war, audiences were both interested in British music *per se* and happy to attend concerts in significant numbers.

While some commentators believed that British composers were aiming to make their music accessible and popular, the *Times* principal music critic, H.C. Colles, argued in the *Music Student* that neglect of British music was a myth, claiming that his records proved that performances were frequent enough to dispel such notions:

I have evidence in a catalogue of London performances which I have kept for some years past which shows that as far as concert performances are concerned the ‘neglect of the British composer’ is a myth of the imagination. It is true that a good many of their performances have been obtained through special agencies designed for their benefit, but how many of these there have been! [...] we have had quite an ample opportunity of taking to our hearts the work of our younger geniuses.<sup>98</sup>

Colles felt that British composers were getting plenty of exposure but many were less content. A complaint was made in the middle of the war in the *Monthly Musical Record* that despite the regular presence of British music on concert programmes, there was nothing of real substance in the Proms.<sup>99</sup> British pieces chosen were often ‘mere trifles’ by composers who wrote better work, or worse, ‘mere trifles by triflers.’ The journal pointed out that nominally increasing the number of British compositions but excluding substantial or significant works would leave composers no better off than before. ‘Unless the directors of our orchestra bodies are going to show a more adventurous spirit than this, things are going to be no brighter for the British composers [...] one feels inclined to say, “*Either more British music, or none at all.*”<sup>100</sup>’ The evidence of commentary on music considered so far indicates that the British composer was certainly not neglected, and the all-or-nothing attitude displayed here was unusual. There does, however, seem to be some justification for the view that programming often concentrated on ‘trifles’.

This is particularly evident in the Proms. Some larger-scale, orchestral pieces by British composers did receive performances during the war – by Mlynarski, for example, or in the programming of Elgar’s first symphony by the London Symphony Orchestra, on May 22 1916 – but the pattern of the Proms was quite

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<sup>98</sup> H. C. Colles, ‘Composers of To-Day,’ *MStud*, 1/4/1915, 38.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Editorial: British Music at the Promenade Concerts,’ *MMR*, 2/10/1916, 257.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* Emphasis original.



different. Delius' piano concerto and Elgar's violin concerto both received three wartime Proms performances, but if one looks at the programming of British music throughout the whole Proms series 1914-1918, there was a concentration on the lighter and shorter side of the repertoire. Native composers were very commonly represented by an overture.<sup>101</sup> The majority of British composers appeared most regularly in the Proms only in small excerpts.<sup>102</sup> Complete pieces were of course performed,<sup>103</sup> but there does seem to be solid evidence to support the complaint that the Proms mainly featured British music only in lighter or shorter pieces.

The increasing emphasis on lighter programming during wartime might be attributable only in part to wartime conditions, and in part to the role that Chappell played in the programme choices, as Langley has suggested, an effect which continued after the war.<sup>104</sup> However, to suggest that the choice of pieces were merely 'trifles' is perhaps misleading, since the evidence would seem to show that British music maintained a strong Proms presence, and popularity, if not quite in the foreground that many composers would have wished. For some commentators, this smaller scale was welcome. The *Observer* critic felt that British composition was too often large in scale and over-ambitious: composers would be better working in smaller forms.<sup>105</sup>

Although we have seen that there was a great deal of rhetoric surrounding British music in the first two to three years of the war, backed up by a large quantity of individual enterprises which programmed British music, the intensity of programming did not remain at the pitch of the early war days. The frequency of high-profile, large-scale concerts of British music so evident in 1915 was not

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<sup>101</sup> These include: Smyth's *The Wreckers* and *The Boatswain's Mate*, Sullivan's *Macbeth* and *Overture di Ballo*, Harty's *Comedy Overture*, and regular appearances of Mackenzie's Overture 'Britannia', understandably enough in terms of the patriotic appeal of its inclusion of 'Rule, Britannia!' amongst other traditional themes. Parry's music appeared only twice, surprisingly; one of the pieces was also an overture, the *Overture to an Unwritten Tragedy*.

<sup>102</sup> Stanford's *Songs of the Sea* made regular but piecemeal appearances, as did others of his songs ('*The King's Highway*', '*Trottin' to the Fair*', for example); Elgar's *Sea Pictures* were not performed complete; Bantock too was represented only in extracts (from *Sappho* and *Ferishtah's Fancies*); songs by Vaughan Williams were extracted from *Songs of Travel* and *On Wenlock Edge*.

<sup>103</sup> Holbrooke's light-hearted *Symphonic Variations on Three Blind Mice*, Stanford's *Irish Rhapsody* (Nos 1 and 4), Vaughan Williams' first *Norfolk Rhapsody* and such pieces as Walford Davies' *Solemn Melody* were regularly played. The *Solemn Melody* had no fewer than fifteen separate Proms performances over the four seasons of the war.

<sup>104</sup> Leanne Langley, 'Building an Orchestra,' 62-6.

<sup>105</sup> 'A Week of British Music,' *Observer*, 16/5/1915, 16.

repeated. This is not to say that the rhetoric of opportunity died away, and the smaller scale initiatives, like that of de Lara, continued with unabated enthusiasm throughout the war. There was, however, a gradual lessening of the amount of British music programmed, perhaps as a reaction to the enthusiasm of 1915.

In 1918, cudgels were again raised on behalf of the British composer, this time specifically with regard to the Proms. The debate was stimulated by correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*: an anonymous letter was published, and commented on by Robin Legge. The topic was subsequently taken up by other commentators, the discussion being summarised in the *Musical Times*.<sup>106</sup> The original letter contained the following passage:

What is the matter with the direction of these concerts? They are [...] almost unique in Europe [...] Yet when everyone is talking of keeping the foreign article out, these people gaily insist on the same old stuff we have heard for years and years [...] I am getting sick to death of hearing the eternal Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Handel [...] and I protest vehemently it is playing down to the public. Fancy five new native works, small trifles carefully selected not to disturb the main Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninov-Wood pieces in the programme. If you critics do your duty you will point out that Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Bantock, Gardiner, Holbrooke – even Stanford and Parry I prefer to the everlasting Rachmaninov-Wood business – are real English composers, as fine as the formerly overplayed Strauss – who, of course, will be reinstated the day peace is signed.<sup>107</sup>

Legge agreed that ‘far too little is being done here to encourage any potential native musical ability’ and further quoted Ernest Palmer,<sup>108</sup> who found it strange that a British orchestra, with British audiences and British players and funded by British money, should pay ‘so little regard [...] to our own composers and their works.’ He went on to ask:

Can anyone say a ‘British night’ would be unreasonable...? The policy adopted [...] is not patriotic or complimentary or encouraging to our own composers, or instructive, from a national point of view, to the audiences [...] I think one night a week ought to be devoted to British works.

Chappell’s response was strongly worded:

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<sup>106</sup> The full text appears in the Appendices.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Discussion on the Queen’s Hall Promenade Programmes,’ *MT*, 1/10/1918, 469-70. Strauss’s reappearance at the Proms was not quite as rapid as the anonymous correspondent predicted, but in 1920 his music was programmed seven times.

<sup>108</sup> Palmer founded the Patron’s Fund to support British composers and facilitate rehearsal and performance of their work: ‘William Yeats Hurlstone,’ RCM, accessed 3/4/2012, <http://www.cph.rcm.ac.uk/Virtual%20Exhibitions/Hurlstone/Programmes/PF%20Flyer.pdf>.

The moment we are convinced by receipts that the public prefer Mr. Joseph Holbrooke's music to that of Beethoven, or Mr. Granville Bantock's compositions to those of Tchaikovsky, we are perfectly prepared radically to alter the character of the Queen's Hall programmes [...] The musical public, which quite well knows what it wants, will not be dictated to by us, or even by eminent musical critics.<sup>109</sup>

Chappell as a company also defended itself by pointing to over sixty British works programmed in the 1918 season, although only two composers (Edward Elgar and Edward German) did they consider to be 'any attraction.' They refuted the accusation of being anti-British, claiming they would in fact, as a publishing house, benefit more from performing recent British works than by performing 'non-copyright works by dead masters' but 'the obstinate British public, who will not be dictated to, still stand in the way.'<sup>110</sup>

Henry Wood's contribution to the debate was that his policy of performing British works as part of an ordinary programme, 'without any special fanfare,' was far more likely to succeed than putting on evenings of only British music:

I believe concerts advertised 'All-British' a mistake. Everyone acquainted with the business side of concert-giving – and it cannot be dismissed contemptuously – will appreciate why.<sup>111</sup>

Wood was not alone in his opinion, although public expression of thoughts similar to this that Beecham was reported to have made was limited:

During the Great War [Beecham] was induced to direct an exclusively British programme – ill-balanced and of unwieldy length. When it was over [...] he was heard to murmur complacently, 'Well, I think we have successfully paved the way this afternoon for another quarter century of German music!'<sup>112</sup>

Regarding the whole complex issue of whether or not British music should be heavily foregrounded, or performed to the exclusion of other nationalities, *Musical Times* summarised the issue somewhat simplistically, concluding that whatever the rhetoric and whatever the nationality, the key to concert success was simply learning how to please an audience:

All discussions of this everlasting topic come round to the conclusion that the average

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<sup>109</sup> 'Discussion on the Queens Hall Promenade Programmes,' *MT*, 1/10/18, 470.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Henry Wood, *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Bax, *Farewell*, 91.

British concert-goer does not care a pin who composes the music, so long as it is found attractive to *him*. Critics, conductors, and publishers cannot sweep this tide away.<sup>113</sup>

This is only partially true, however. One could argue that audience conditioning over many years also affects taste: smaller-scale concert promoters were trying in the war to accustom audiences to a broader variety of compositions, particularly from British composers. There does seem to have been an audience for all-British concerts. The crucial distinction in the case of the Proms was that the series had been running for decades before the war and would continue long after the war; they were part of the normal fabric of British musical life, war or no war.<sup>114</sup> De Lara's events, and other one-off functions like the Mlynarski series, were brought into being by the war itself. Whilst they found audiences, in some cases new audiences, these were audiences also born out of the war itself. Chappell and Wood recognised the broader arc of concert-going patterns; others were able to profit from short-term changes in habits, and also from patriotic motivations. The co-existence of both these streams of belief and experience about the place of British music in programmes is a key element of British wartime musical life.

British music on concert platforms, then was a regular subject of debate throughout the war, but the trope of opportunity was not restricted to compositions: the nationality of the performer was also a topic of interest, and this is the topic of the next section.

### 3.4 Opportunities for British Executant Musicians

After the war, conductor Dan Godfrey claimed not only that British audiences had had the presence of good British music revealed to them by the changed conditions

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<sup>113</sup> 'Discussion on the Queens Hall Promenade Programmes,' *MT*, 1/10/1918, 470.

<sup>114</sup> The Proms had been running since 1895 at the then newly opened Queen's Hall, and its mission to create a regular audience for classical music is analysed in 'Building an Orchestra, Creating an Audience: Robert Newman and the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, 1895–1926', in *The Proms: A New History*, ed. Jenny Doctor, David Wright and Nicholas Kenyon (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 32–73. For a useful discussion of the programming choices in the early years, as well as references to Wood's education of the public, the democratisation of music that the Proms represented, and the place of the series in the nationalist discourse surrounding music, see Lawrence Poston, 'Henry Wood, the "Proms," and National Identity in Music, 1895–1904,' *Victorian Studies*, 47/3, 2005, 397–426.

of wartime, but that the war had also given chances to talented British executants:

There can be no question that the Great War did much for British music, for the simple reason that, *faute de mieux*, otherwise the absence of the foreigner (German) from our midst, we were compelled to [...] look to ourselves for entertainment. For once we had to rely exclusively upon our own people [...] and the result was to bring to the notice of the public what it had not particularly noticed before, namely, that there were both good music and good executants right in our midst.<sup>115</sup>

Although, as this section will demonstrate, there were indeed ways in which certain native performers gained more ground and had more opportunities as a result of the changed circumstances of war, Godfrey both oversimplifies and exaggerates in his retrospective, as does Eugene Goossens. Goossens's memoir has a typically sweeping statement in his summary of the effect of the war on British musicians:

At the outbreak of war, all German professional musicians in Britain – and their number was legion – were sent back to the Fatherland, to the great delight of many British artists, who found themselves with increased work and considerable improved chances of livelihood. The public was soon to realise that in Albert Sammons, Felix Salmond, Lionel Tertis, William Murdoch, Myra Hess, and many other instrumentalists (and singers) England possessed the equal of the fine German artists who had up to that time almost completely monopolized the British musical scene. Activities of our Philharmonic String Quartet were also proportionately increased, thus ridding us of the inferiority complex under which all musicians of British origin had laboured up to the middle of 1914.<sup>116</sup>

This description of the immediate disappearance of German musicians is not strictly true; we saw earlier that various resident enemy aliens continued in their jobs in orchestras, such as the New Queen's Hall Orchestra, for some time after the outbreak of the war. Their disappearance was gradual, dependent on the whim of employers or on various official policies.<sup>117</sup>

Nonetheless, Goossens' view of the chance that the war gave to British executant musicians is interesting, if slightly misleading. The names he gives as examples of those whose careers were made or helped by the war are all soloists. However, if one looks at soloists' careers, Goossens' claim that chances for performing musicians had been 'almost completely monopolized' by Germans before the war is revealed as simply inaccurate. Even a cursory look at concert programming for pre-

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<sup>115</sup> Godfrey, *Memories and Music*, 138.

<sup>116</sup> Goossens, *Overture and Beginners*, 110.

<sup>117</sup> Panayi, *Enemy*, chapter 3, 'Internment and Repatriation,' 70-98.

war years shows that both foreign nationals of other countries (e.g., Russians Brodsky and Rachmaninoff, Danish pianist Johanne Stockmarr, Catalan cellist Casals, to give but a tiny sample), and many British executants (e.g., Catterall, Sammons, Harold Bauer) were also in the public eye and highly regarded.<sup>118</sup>

We can conclude from this that although there was a perception amongst the musical community that the foreign, particularly German, executant musician was monopolising performances in Britain, as Goossens' account has it, the reality was otherwise. Even with regard to orchestral players, Henry Wood claimed that the Queen's Hall Orchestra had 'never had more than three German players.'<sup>119</sup> Myra Hess, for example, one of the artists Goossens singles out as having come to prominence during the war, was already a well-known artist by 1914, and had performed in Amsterdam under Mengelberg.<sup>120</sup>

The economic, social and political situation in the decades leading up to 1914 had been harsh, despite a commonly held nostalgic view that pre-war Britain was a prosperous and peaceful idyll shattered by the war. The unsettled nature of political and social life in the pre-war era may well have contributed to fears of the foreigner in many domains. As Jose Harris has said, 'fears of racial and national eclipse' were widely expressed in the pre-war decades and it is therefore unsurprising that music too should have been so affected.<sup>121</sup> This fear of threatened livelihood, combined with renewed national sensibilities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, may well have contributed to distorted understanding of the true number of German musicians working in Britain, and exaggerated the imagined threat.

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<sup>118</sup> For November 1913, looking at a single journal at concerts in a single city (London), the nationality of the artists represented does not favour Germany: British artists included Fanny Davies, May Mukle, Harold Bauer (later naturalised as an American, in 1917); foreign (but not German) artists included Casals, Thibaud, Elman, Carreño, Stockmarr: in fact, in November of that year – the height of the London concert season – there were no German soloists mentioned in the *Musical Times* survey of London concerts. 'London Concerts,' *MT*, 1/11/1913, 747-8.

<sup>119</sup> 'Future of Music: Interview with Sir Henry Wood: 23 Years at Queen's Hall,' *Observer*, 2/6/1918, 7.

<sup>120</sup> 'William Mengelberg,' *MT*, 1/7/1912, 433. The *MT* listed a number of British performers and composers whose work had been seen in Holland: 'In the last few years a considerable number of English artists have appeared with Mengelberg and his orchestra in Holland, and they have won golden opinions. Among them may be mentioned Mr Ben Davies, Miss Fanny Davies, Mr Lionel Tertis (who has played Mr Dale's Viola suite several times), and Miss Myra Hess.'

<sup>121</sup> Harris, *Private Lives*, 256.

It is undoubtedly true that many German musicians were involved in British musical life. Traditionally, British bands and orchestras, especially in cities like Manchester, with its large German community, had included German members. Goossens wrote his memoir in 1951 and the elapsed time may account for compressing the gradual disappearance of non-naturalised Germans from the orchestra into a shorter time scale. Even allowing for this distortion of memory – and Beecham’s biographer John Lucas describes Goossens’s *Overture and Beginners* as ‘his somewhat wayward autobiography’<sup>122</sup> – we are still left with the question, was Goossens correct in seeing the war as an unparalleled opportunity for British performers?

Despite his exaggeration, Goossens was in at least one instance substantially correct. It is evident that certain British executant artists were afforded greater opportunities on the concert platform by the war. The war may be said to have opened people’s eyes to existing talent and in this respect alone the war was an opportunity. But certain artists did receive performance opportunities that they would not have had otherwise. This in turn opened the eyes of the concert-going public and the music critics drew attention to the wealth of native talent.

An obvious example is Albert Sammons. Sammons had been given the chance to move into the art music world, after Beecham ‘discovered’ him playing in a hotel band in 1908.<sup>123</sup> Sammons was not an entirely unfamiliar figure before the war, as he had led not only the Beecham orchestra and the Philharmonic Society orchestra, but also that of Diaghilev’s *Ballets russes*, including touring with Diaghilev and Monteux in 1913.<sup>124</sup> He was a founder member of the London String Quartet. However, after the outbreak of war, his public profile, as well as his performing opportunities, increased enormously.

Sammons played in the Proms as soloist for the first time (Lalo’s *Symphonie Espagnole*) on 29 September 1914. Perhaps more significantly, he stood in for

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<sup>122</sup> Lucas, *Beecham*, 123, note.

<sup>123</sup> Beecham describes exchanging notes with Sammons about the correct tempo of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto*, which Sammons was playing at the Waldorf the night Beecham first met him. Beecham, *Mingled Chime*, 117.

<sup>124</sup> Leslie East and Eric Wetherell, ‘Sammons, Albert,’ *Grove Music Online*, accessed 8/3/2011, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24466>.

Kreisler in the Elgar Violin Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra on 23 November 1914. On that occasion, the *Manchester Guardian* noted:

Tonight's concert of the London Symphony Orchestra will be remembered on account of the excellent performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto by Mr Albert Sammons. [...] It may be that some firmly believe Mr. Kreisler to the only adequate interpreter of Elgar's music, and if this is so to-night's performance ought to have the very desirable result of showing the absurdity of the notion. [...] To-night a young English violinist [...] played it with complete success.<sup>125</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* felt that Sammons had 'not yet fully received the recognition his fine talents deserve.'<sup>126</sup> The *Observer* championed Sammons too, noting in April 1915 that 'his brilliant abilities have only tardily been recognised by the public and are not even yet, perhaps, fully appreciated.'<sup>127</sup> In its review of that concert the paper described Sammons as a 'violinist whose splendid interpretative powers and immaculate technical skill have long been in evidence in other, but less prominent, directions,' adding that he had an assured future and had, 'at a bound, placed himself in the front rank of solo players and [imposed] his genius on a not always quick-sighted public with a minimum of effort.'<sup>128</sup> Interestingly, none of these articles explicitly connects Sammons's greater exposure to the war. They choose instead to focus on the long-deserved nature of his success. It is retrospectives that often make the connection with the war:

His career as a soloist of national repute began in November 1914 when he replaced Kreisler at short notice in a performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto.<sup>129</sup>

Not everyone thought that the absence of certain foreign performers was positive. Some commentators felt that the success of foreign performers was simply because many of them were highly talented. This was remarked on in the field of conducting in particular:

There is nothing unpatriotic in stating the truth, and so far as conductors are

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<sup>125</sup> 'Elgar's Concerto Performed by English Violinist,' *MG*, 24/11/1914, 6.

<sup>126</sup> 'Music: The Week's Concerts,' *MG*, 22/11/1914, 9. In total, Sammons appeared at the Proms five times during the war and made many other appearances.

<sup>127</sup> 'Music,' *Observer*, 11/4/1915, 7.

<sup>128</sup> 'Music: London Symphony Concert,' *Observer*, 18/4/1915, 4. The *Observer* continued its enthusiasm with regard to Sammons and described his playing in a 1916 performance of the Elgar concerto as at 'a level that could scarcely be excelled.' 'Concerts of the Week: London Symphony Orchestra,' *Observer*, 26/11/1916, 12.

<sup>129</sup> East and Wetherell, 'Sammons, Albert,' *Grove Music Online*.



concerned, it is indisputable that some of the greatest are of foreign birth.<sup>130</sup>

Other commentators also remarked, in more balanced terms, that it was talent that had won performers places, not merely blind, pro-foreigner prejudice. Such reserved attitudes remind us that there were those who saw the possible opportunities opened up by the war as potential dangers, to be handled with caution, as we noted above.

We have noted that composers of concert music and executant musicians alike were seen to have a greater chance of employment and exposure because of the changed conditions of wartime, or certainly that there was a perception of such in the musical press. In the field of operatic performance, there was similar discussion, and the final strand of the rhetoric of opportunity that I examine is the opportunity for opera in Britain during the war, in a variety of ways.

### 3.5 Operatic Opportunities

In this section, I address opportunities that were ‘operatic’ in various ways: the chance for audiences, keen to have access to opera that was accessible (in both language and price); opportunities for native composers; and various entrepreneurial endeavours that sprang up during the war.

The name of Thomas Beecham is often raised in connection with opera during the war, but Beecham’s wartime opera companies were but only a part of a much larger number of groups performing opera, in London and elsewhere. Space does not permit an exhaustive survey here of all the various schemes, but a useful and detailed survey of opera companies, performances of individual works, as well as the business and management side of opera forms the basis of Gordon Williams’s chapter, ‘Fashionable audiences and the opera’ during the war.<sup>131</sup> Williams’s work is an invaluable study of the whole theatrical scene in Britain during the war and is particularly welcome in two specific ways. Firstly, it accepts opera into the fold of

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<sup>130</sup> ‘Music and Musicians: Melba’s Patriotic Concerts: Combative Musicians,’ *Queen*, 10/10/1914, non-paginated cutting from Press Cuttings of the GSM, LMA, CLA/056/AD/04/09.

<sup>131</sup> Gordon Williams, *British Theatre in the Great War: A Re-evaluation* (London: Continuum, 2003), 269-336.

the theatre proper, and secondly, it aims to draw the realities of theatrical life during the war out of an obscurity it has suffered through ignorance of the true vibrancy of theatrical life in the years 1914-1918. (This study aims to contribute to understanding the world of art music in a similar way.) In addition, Steven Martin's work on national opera in Britain in the early twentieth century includes a very useful survey of the activities of travelling opera companies in the early twentieth century.<sup>132</sup> Of the companies giving operatic performances both in London and its suburbs and touring nationally, the following all continued successfully throughout the war and received regular mention in the musical press: the Carl Rosa, Moody-Manners, Harrison-Frewin, O'Mara and Beecham opera companies. Other smaller companies also existed but attracted less national attention, although not necessarily less of an audience share: the list of companies active at this time can be seen in the table below.

Beecham's prevalence in histories which attend to opera during the war, however, may have some basis in the public recognition of Beecham's work at the time, combined with the fact that Beecham gave opera in West End theatres, whereas visiting opera companies were more likely to perform in the suburbs. As Steven Martin has pointed out, Harold Rosenthal's claim that 'such opera there was in London during the war years was given by the Beecham Opera Company' is unfounded.<sup>133</sup> By way of example, Lilian Baylis's Old Vic found opera more profitable than Shakespeare and often shored up the latter with profits from the former.<sup>134</sup> However there is a great deal of evidence to show that Beecham was indeed highly prominent at this time. This is evident not only in the serious musical press, but generally: *The Tatler*, for example, that organ of society news and gossip with a focus on theatrical life, often features mention of Beecham. At this era each issue of *The Tatler* began with a fictionalised satirical gossip column, 'The Letters of

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<sup>132</sup> Martin, *British Operatic Machine*. See in particular chapter three, 'The Progress of Opera in English,' and appendix one, 'Preliminary List of Travelling Opera Companies in Existence During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.' A recent and welcome study covering this field in more detail is Paul Rodmell's *Opera in the British Isles, 1875-1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>133</sup> Harold Rosenthal, *Two Centuries of Opera at Covent Garden* (London: Putnam, 1958), 388; also quoted in Martin, *British Operatic Machine*, 111.

<sup>134</sup> Martin, *British Operatic Machine*, 140: 'Opera became more profitable to Baylis than Shakespeare performances and for some years the deficit of the Shakespeare productions were underwritten by the opera surfeits.'

Eve,' which had begun in June 1914.<sup>135</sup> In reality written by Olga Maitland Davidson, 'Eve' was able to poke fun at society, its mores and habits, as well as providing plentiful gossip and comment.<sup>136</sup> For the war years, her letters provide an effective social history of the introduction of most of the war-time introductions: restrictions on lighting, changes in opening hours to theatres, travel restrictions, conscription, and the introduction of various taxes. The column also highlights the many occupations and diversions of women of substance, including charitable work and vegetable growing, but for our purposes here the columns are germane because one of the great passions of 'Eve' is the opera, and the name that appears again and again in this connection is that of Thomas Beecham:

Of course we're going to the Beecham opera season at the Shaftesbury on Saturday' (29/9/1915, 400)

There's quite a long list of things we've got to go to [...] last but not least, Beecham opera at the Aldwych. (24/4/1916, 98)

Talking of opera, it quite reminded one of the old days before the war the way Sir Thomas B did Phoebus and Pan at the Aldwych last week. (*Tatler*, 5/7/1916, 3)

Really don't know how we should have got on these last weeks, by the way, without the Beecham Opera – *such* a relief after war-charities and war-stories and war-rumours and, er, of course, war-savings, to leave it all behind and escape for three whole hours into the topping make-believe world of Boris and the Magic Flute and Phoebus and Tosca and Butterfly and Bohème and Il Seraglio.' (*Tatler*, 2/8/1916, 132)

Beecham's name was also the only name regularly mentioned by Eve in connection with concerts – 'You'd never have thought there *could* be such things as Zep [*sic*] raids if you'd been with us at the Queen's Hall the other night to see Mr. Beecham conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. *Such* a crowd for war time, and *such* music, and such amazing and amusing – but always, of course, refined – Beechamic gestures.'<sup>137</sup> It was not only the gossip section of *The Tatler*, however, that referred to Beecham. 'The Passing Shows,' the theatrical review section of the magazine written by the regular theatre critic ('Arkay') also regularly referred to Beecham's

<sup>135</sup> The title of the column was in full, 'The Letters of Eve: Being the Correspondence of the Hon. Evelyn Fitzhenry with her friend, the Lady Betty Berkshire.'

<sup>136</sup> Some of the letters were collected in 1918, before the war's end, in Olivia Maitland Davidson, *The Letters of Eve by Eve of the Tatler* (London: Constable, 1918). Anne Fish illustrated the originals, and her drawings were exhibited and sold at the Fine Art Gallery in 1916: mention is often made of the exhibition in the column at this time, see for example *Tatler*, 'Letters of Eve,' 2/8/1916, 132. See also Mark Bryant, 'Fish (Harriet) Annie (1890–1964)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 18/11/2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57152>.

<sup>137</sup> 'Letters of Eve,' *Tatler*, 3/11/1915, 129.

operatic work. In July 1915, Arkay wrote

I must confess that I have seldom enjoyed a performance of *Madame Butterfly* – never a performance of Gounod’s *Romeo and Juliet* – so much as I did at the Shaftesbury theatre last Saturday and Monday evenings. Both vocally, scenically, and artistically they were deserving of the highest praise.<sup>138</sup>

Beecham’s prominence, both in London and on tour, can therefore be seen as some justification for his prominence in subsequent accounts of opera during the war, but the broader context of travelling opera is also important to bear in mind.

| Name of Opera Company   | Years active                             |
|---|--|
| Thomas Beecham Opera Company  | 1910-1920                                |
| Cavaliere Castellano Italian Opera Company                            | 1908-1915                                |
| Empire English Opera Company (renamed Allington Charsley Co. in 1917) | 1915-1921                                |
| Godwin Hallett Opera Co   | c.1910-late 1920s                        |
| Harrison-Frewin Opera Company   | Established 1916                         |
| Moody-Manners   | 1897-1916                                |
| Flintoff Moore  | 1917-1920                                |
| O’Mara Company  | 1912-1933                                |
| HB Phillips   | 1917-1919 (then subsumed into Carl Rosa) |
| Quinlan Opera Company   | 1910-1914                                |
| Ridding Opera Company   | Active 1908, 1913, 1916, 1922, 1924      |
| Carl Rosa   | 1873-1960                                |
| Turner Grand [or English] Opera Company                               | 1885-1917/18                             |

Figure 5 List of Travelling Opera Companies during the First World War<sup>139</sup>

Only the Moody-Manners company failed to continue beyond the end of the war. However, although the company was put up for sale in 1918 (having given its last performance in 1916), the advertisement stated that it had never, in its twenty-year history, made a loss, even during the war, and its difficulties are more likely to have been the dearth of male singers than any lack of audience.<sup>140</sup> In 1916, Musicus wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that the company was planning a tour of South Africa and had recently ‘broken all records’ for attendance at its recent season in Liverpool.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Arkay, ‘The Passing Shows: Opera in English,’ *Tatler*, 13/10/1915.

<sup>139</sup> Information taken with permission from (and additional information supplied by) Steven Martin, *British Operatic Machine*.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Musical Notes,’ *DT*, 18/5/1918, 3.

<sup>141</sup> ‘Musical Notes,’ *DT*, 4/3/1916, 6.

These companies all had in common that (with very occasional exceptions) they performed opera in English, whatever the original language. This was, of course, not a new phenomenon: performance in English had long been the custom of touring opera companies, and perhaps the reason for their success, in the accessibility of what they presented. What was more significant was the involvement of someone of Beecham's national reputation for grand opera also consistently giving opera in English. Beecham received a great deal of praise for his services to opera in the press of the time, although few of those commentators recognised that he was building on work already done: the *Monthly Musical Record* acknowledged at the end of the war, that in his success with opera, 'it is only just to recall the fact that the Carl Rosa, Moody-Manners, and other companies prepared the way.'<sup>142</sup>

The surge of interest in opera may be less of a change than certain commentators claimed: it is possible that the involvement of Beecham drew attention to a phenomenon that was already well established, giving an impression that large audiences were also new. However, although it is undoubtedly true that the touring opera companies were not only popular but had been serving the cause of native opera for many years before the war – in the language of performance, in giving British singers a useful training ground, and in also promoting operas by British composers<sup>143</sup> – it is also true that these audiences increased during the war: we noted above that the Moody-Manners company had had record attendances. The Carl Rosa company, reported the *Referee*, had, in 1916, an 'exceptionally prosperous season' with 'attendances everywhere much larger than usual.'<sup>144</sup> This company's wartime success was great enough for it to expand in 1918, firstly establishing two completely separate companies to tour independently, the 'Kate' and 'Duplicate' branches, and then just after the end of the war, still unable to fulfil demand, absorbing the H.B. Phillips company as well.<sup>145</sup> The phenomenon of increased

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<sup>142</sup> 'The Year 1918: Opera,' *MMR*, 1/1/1919, 1.

<sup>143</sup> Colin McAlpin was just one example of a British composer whose work was premièred by a touring opera company, in this case Moody-Manners (1903 and 1915): see Williams, *British Theatre*, 287.

<sup>144</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 17/12/1916, 5.

<sup>145</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Achievements and Prospects,' *Ref*, 29/12/1918, 3. Williams gives further valuable detail about travelling opera companies, for example that, despite an apparent *Times* belief that opera did not exist outside the West End, the Victor Turner touring company,

audience interest was noted in London too:

The Beecham opera performances have been the outstanding feature of our metropolitan musical life; and, curious, and even somewhat paradoxical though it may seem, the audiences attending the performances have steadily grown in number, until at this moment they are almost certainly the largest ever brought and kept together for a great length of time in the annals of opera in English.<sup>146</sup>

Beecham's involvement in opera during the war began as a result of an invitation from actor-manager Robert Courtneidge. Courtneidge had directed a season of opera in English at the Shaftesbury Theatre, in co-operation with H.B. Phillips.<sup>147</sup> Having had some success in a season including *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Madame Butterfly*, *La Bohème* and *Rigoletto* as well as smaller-scale works, he invited Beecham to join him for a second season. Although Courtneidge's memoir implies that the enterprise failed financially – 'The performances were very fine but the bombing raids ruined what should have been prosperous seasons'<sup>148</sup> – the reporting of this London-based enterprise was positive.<sup>149</sup>

Beecham's operatic endeavours during the war – whether with Courtneidge or in later incarnations when the company moved to the Aldwych Theatre, and toured extensively – kept opera in English, given to the highest professional standards, in the forefront of the public musical mind, bringing opera to a wider attention than

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which visited Dalston annually, gave *Tristan* there in 1915, long before Beecham in 1916. See Williams, *British Theatre*, 281 and 325 n.86.

<sup>146</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Music in 1916,' *DT*, 29/12/1916, 4.

<sup>147</sup> Phillips for a time ran his own company, bought the Harrison-Frewin Company during the war, and then sold both to the Carl Rosa Opera Company in 1918, which he bought and directed from 1923 till his death in 1950. See Wesley McCann, *H. B. Phillips – Impresario* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2001), 18-21.

<sup>148</sup> Robert Courtneidge, *I Was An Actor* (London: Hutchinson, 1930), 221.

<sup>149</sup> The first season was highly praised by Legge in the *DT*: 'It has proved a success financially, although it lasted longer than any previous season of opera in London in my recollection [...] In a manner that can only be called marvellous he got rid of the conventional English operatic idea that the chorus is there merely to sing, not to act. His chorus was alert as his principals [...] During the season no fewer than 104 performances have been given in fifteen complete weeks. Is that not fit to take its share in the musical climax of the year? To my thinking it is almost the centre of the climax, since the British public is not easily moved to take an interest in operatic affairs [...] Upwards of 100 people were constantly employed during the fifteen weeks and more, and they were all British on and behind the stage, in the orchestra and elsewhere, the orchestra including members of the chief London orchestras.' Robin Legge, *DT*, 15/5/1915, 6. Of the second season, Legge again commented, 'At this moment that part of the public which for long has raised the cry of English opera, or opera in English, for the English public is enjoying a glorious revenge, for it is enjoying to the full performances on a level not reached here since the palmiest days of the old Carl Rosa. There is even an element of danger in the completeness of the triumph, for the standard now set is so high that it cannot again be lowered, and it is not often that two such geniuses in operatic affairs as Mr Thomas Beecham and Mr Robert Courtneidge are found hand in hand in one scheme.' Robin Legge, 'Opera in English: An Admirable Season,' *DT*, 9/10/1915, 6.

among those who already habituated travelling opera performances. This was for various reasons. The press noted that there was more opera available to Londoners, for example, than there was when a Covent Garden season could take place;<sup>150</sup> critics took a particular interest in new works (both foreign, such as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Coq d'Or* performed in 1918, for example, and British, for example Stanford's *The Critic* and Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate*, both premièred in 1915/16); and the standard of singing amongst native performers was widely praised.<sup>151</sup>

The war brought a new confidence that opera in English had a secure place in the interests of a British audience, in London as well as in the provinces, as scholars have previously noted. Williams, for example, notes that although 'wartime achievements failed to bring about any long-term reshaping of opera's place in British culture' the very real success of opera in wartime, in terms of numbers of performances and sizes of audiences, nonetheless offered 'food for reflection:'

In abeyance was the circuitous notion that opera is expensive, therefore rarefied and not of the same order as other drama, its mystique preserved by playing it in a language not understood by audiences [...] Another factor was the unavailability of international stars [...] their absence disposed of a potential artistic and a certain economic imbalance [...] It became clear that [the globetrotting performer] was not essential, perhaps not even desirable. Attentive and musicianly singers, acting with conviction, could produce memorable performances. In short, it meant a more effective [...] more accessible [...] delivery of the drama, and at a more economic rate. In these factors lay the secret of wartime opera's burgeoning success.<sup>152</sup>

However, those who expressed such confidence failed to take into account the degree to which the conditions and successes pertaining in wartime were dependent on the very conditions of the war itself. Beecham may have confidently announced in July 1918, 'if we maintain the very good standard of last season, there is no doubt that the cause of opera in English is won,'<sup>153</sup> but the resumption of peacetime conditions did not in fact see this confidence rewarded. Although

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<sup>150</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: The Year That's Awa', *DT*, 23/12/1915, 3.

<sup>151</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: More About Opera in English', *DT*, 16/10/1915, 6: Legge wrote that British soloists were 'at this moment fitting themselves out for a greater career after the war [...] all to the good of opera in English.' He also particularly praised 'the sheer beauty of the chorus singing.'

<sup>152</sup> Williams, *British Theatre*, 320-1. Williams's recognition that *some* operas were given at a more economic rate cannot be taken to apply to all operatic ventures: as noted above, Beecham's *Figaro* was losing a great deal of money. However, Beecham's productions cannot be taken to be representative of much touring or indeed wartime opera.

<sup>153</sup> 'News of the Month', *MH*, 1/7/1918, 215.

Beecham's own involvement in opera was temporarily curtailed immediately after the war because of personal financial difficulties, it is in any case debatable that he would have been able to continue. Already towards the end of the war, money troubles were besetting his operatic plans: despite the unstinting praise for his production of *The Marriage of Figaro* in the summer of 1917, the company was losing £1,000 a week by the November of that year and abruptly announced a premature end to the season.<sup>154</sup> The majority of the other opera companies, and especially those who were primarily touring companies, continued successfully, even after the war, but Beecham's hopes for a transformation of British opera on a national scale – and particularly, British opera regularly heard in London – were destined to be disappointed.

### 3.6 Conclusion

We have seen that, with the enforced severance of the Anglo-German musical relationship, the British music landscape was fundamentally altered for the duration of the war. The effects of war were far-reaching in many areas of British musical life during the years 1914-18. Alongside all the practical implications of wartime – the difficulties of obtaining parts and performers from overseas, to give but one example – there ran a wide-ranging, and widely held, rhetoric of opportunity. The abrupt derailment of the normal course of affairs was seen as a chance to change British musical life for the better, whether to redress the wrongs (or perceived wrongs) of unfair foreign competition, or the chance to prove that British executant musicians and British composers could compete on an equal footing with musicians of other nations.

Not everyone agreed that the talent was sufficient to meet the opportunity, nor that the competition had in any way been unfairly advantaged. But in all cases, at the beginning of the war, and for the first two to three years of wartime, there was a strong sense that with the extraordinary conditions of war, in the enforced hiatus of the normal unfolding of events which all musicians had to undergo, the time should

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<sup>154</sup> Lucas, *Obsession with Music*, 145: Beecham did not pull out completely, however, and in 1918 'with heroic if reckless obstinacy' carried on, only increasing debts and storing up further difficulties for a later date.



be used wisely. Although smaller scale projects designed to benefit from these opportunities continued, we have also seen that in larger scale series like the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, there was a gradual lessening of British music on programmes. Despite this, the fact that such an issue prompted heated discussion in the press demonstrates that the discourse promoting the war as an opportunity for British music was still very much alive even in the last months of the war.

It is clear that composers, conductors and performers alike were acutely aware that the circumstances of war were an opportunity to be seized. Can we then therefore describe their motivations as opportunist? Certainly there is an element of opportunism in the promotion of British music at this time. Those composers whose works were not often programmed hoped that this would be their time; more conducting and performing opportunities fell to British nationals than before.<sup>155</sup> Taking advantage of such opportunities as offered themselves is a natural course of action for anyone in a similar position, and no doubt the increased exposure and reputation in some cases served those involved well. Whether there was any cynical or exploitative motive behind such actions is hard to establish. No doubt those whose livelihood depended on the continued presence of art music in the concert halls – and therefore discussion and promotion of it in the pages of the press – took every opportunity to promote the importance of music at all times, and particularly so in wartime (as we will see in the next chapter.) Although it is indeed difficult to establish the motives behind actions that we can analyse only through the public record of them, it is also self-evident that there would have been a variety of prompts and justifications. The war, while a time of tragedy, was also a time when chances presented themselves, to musicians as to many. It is not surprising that they seized them, although it is also evident that for many, these personal by-products of professional benefit were sometimes also dressed in the rhetoric of patriotism and service.

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<sup>155</sup> The Hallé Orchestra, for example, conducted by German Michael Balling in the years before the war, was conducted during the war by a variety of conductors, many British: the 1915 season had Thomas Beecham as musical adviser and occasional conductor, and other concerts were directed by Safonoff, Ronald and Mlynarski. 'The Hallé Season in Manchester,' *MG*, 10/9/1915, 12. In 1916, Beecham also used Elgar and Eugene Goossens. 'The Hallé Concerts: Programmes in the Coming Season,' *MG*, 15/9/1916, 6. 1917's Hallé concerts added Hubert Bath to the roster. 'The Hallé Concerts,' *MG*, 16/2/1917, 10.

This rhetoric of a great cause of British music is clearly evident in the published discourse at the time, and certain individuals during the war saw themselves – or portrayed themselves – as serving in this cause. This was done in differing ways: by programming it, playing it, writing about it, or facilitating its performance by others. We have also seen that despite some reservations, the reception accorded to British music, certainly during the earlier part of the war, was in some ways radically different to its reception even a year before the war: the positive press reaction to the 1915 plethora of British music concerts would have been unthinkable in peacetime. The diminished amount of public exposure to British music towards the end of the war, as seen in the debate about programming at the Proms, was cause for public debate about whether or not concerts of British music were viable, thus demonstrating that the subject of native music continued to be of public interest throughout the war. Patriotism and necessity, in perhaps equal measure, gave the lustre of attraction to British music. The determination on the part of many to place British music centre stage during the war was a part of a larger understanding of the role of the home front in the wider war effort. The way in which art music was seen to play a key role in both the practical and the emotional life of the nation at war is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter Four: The Uses of Music

It may possibly be assumed that in the midst of war's alarms there is no place for the gentle arts. This is a fallacy. Apart from the uneconomical aspect of dread it is in times such as the present that music may be of the greatest national service. We shall not mend matters by assuming the woebegone countenance. Moreover, we believe, that we have entered into this terrible business with perfectly clean hands and a clear conscience. Let us then gird on the armour of right and go forward cheerfully until such time as One, who is greater than all principalities and powers, decrees a halt. Let us also, so far as in us lies, maintain the ordinary tenor of our ways with courage and confidence. Music is a national necessity, possibly of more value in times of unrest and anxiety than at any other epoch; and do not let us condemn the thousands who depend for their livelihood upon their art to suffer and decay. No good purpose can possibly be served by withholding support from concerts; to curtail the cost of musical instruction is to indulge in a selfish and harmful retrenchment; to begrudge the payment of the weekly penny for a musical publication is a senseless economy. No, in times such as these, every encouragement should be given to the gentle arts. [...] It really must not be imagined that music is a luxury to be shelved in face of 'more serious things.' It is even more a necessity in times of war than in times of peace.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst few outside musical circles would have agreed with the leader-writer of the *Musical Standard* in 1914 that 'music was a national necessity,' such questions nonetheless came rapidly to the forefront of musicians' minds after war was declared. The uncertainty regarding the war's effect meant that music – its practice and pursuit, its purpose and aim, its habits and traditions – was scrutinised as it had rarely been before. The immediate paralysis of many regular musical activities was short-lived, although certain festivals were cancelled and did not resume, either for the duration of the war or at all.<sup>2</sup> These cancellations were in some respects an understandable reaction to the crisis. No one knew whether or not life was about to change out of all recognition, and the practical implications of the state of war were not known.

Music soon began to reassert itself, however, and commentators noted that musical activity was not merely justifiable at a time of war, but in some cases a duty.<sup>3</sup> This is

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<sup>1</sup> 'Notes and Comments: The Things that Matter,' *MS*, 22/8/1914, 141-2.

<sup>2</sup> Plans for the 1914 Three Choirs Festival and the 1915 Birmingham Triennial Festival were immediately shelved, and the Leeds Festival scheduled for 1916 did not take place. The Three Choirs Festival resumed operations after the war in 1920 and the Leeds Festival resumed in 1922. The Birmingham Festival never resumed operation. See Pippa Drummond, *The Provincial Music Festival in England, 1784-1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), especially 3 and 12.

<sup>3</sup> As Collins has noted, similar exercises were carried out in the theatrical profession: 'The theatrical profession, in order to justify its existence, had to produce a theatre that was seen to be purposeful and relevant.' Collins, *Theatre at War*, 3.

shown by the *Musical Standard*'s opinion, quoted above, that every encouragement should be given to the 'gentle arts' at a time of international aggression. Initially concerned that concert-going betrayed a level of frivolity or disengagement with the war, gradually the role of music as a constructive or uplifting distraction became accepted:

That the public welcomes the distraction offered by music from the one momentous issue was proved by the enormous audience at Queen's Hall on the day on which the news of the fall of Antwerp came through.<sup>4</sup>

The *Music Student* was also strongly in favour of maintaining normal musical activity in wartime, in attending musical events, performing, and also publishing music. Its editor established 'The Patriotic Publishing Company' and in the first three weeks of business sold 60,000 copies of their first publication, *National Songs of the Allies*.<sup>5</sup> Stressing the common sense practicalities of 'Business as Usual' to avoid unemployment, it also highlighted that there were not only sound artistic as well as business reasons for continuing musical life: 'At a time like this, the calming influence of our art is more than ever needed.'<sup>6</sup>

Questions about the acceptability or validity of musical activity were new, as Bernarr Rainbow has demonstrated: a gradual change in the mid-seventeenth century had resulted in a belief that 'music fulfilled no useful function, had lost its earlier status as a badge of culture [and] was, at a time of thriving patriotic insularity, increasingly regarded as the preserve of foreigners.' Those who made music, particularly gentlemen, were seen 'in a highly frivolous and contemptible light.'<sup>7</sup> These questions were revived in wartime, and in turn raised more profound questions – about why one might justify undertaking musical activities, whether as performer, composer, or audience – or more fundamental questions relating to music's role *per se*. Not only were musicians, performers and listeners alike, forced to ponder whether they could or should continue their normal activities, the very fact of music itself came under scrutiny. The war became a catalyst for examining and justifying an occupation, or cultural habit, often practised without undue reflection.

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<sup>4</sup> 'In the Concert Room,' *MMR*, 2/11/1914, 305.

<sup>5</sup> 'Editorial: War Music,' *MStu*, 1/10/1914, 44: 'The Company has been formed by the Editor of *The Music Student* ... with a view to the avoidance of the dismissal of any members of the clerical staff of the paper at a time of economic strain, and not only has it served this purpose, but it has also resulted in much work for printers and for a body of otherwise unemployed journalists, musicians, and others.'

<sup>6</sup> "'The Music Student' and the War,' *MStu*, 1/9/1914, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Bernarr Rainbow, *The Land Without Music: Musical Education in England 1800-1860 and its Continental Antecedents* (London: Novello, 1967), 24.

The First World War was thus a time of introspection for many involved in music. This chapter investigates the ways in which public commentary on music attempted to demonstrate that it had a real, practical and vital role to play, in wartime as much as – if not more so than – in peacetime. Firstly, I address the broader moral discourse that the war raised, a discussion of the appropriateness of musical activity, and the ways in which the war was seized by some as an opportunity for musicians for reflection. Secondly, I examine the discourse around the consoling power of music: at a time of national stress and increasingly widespread bereavement, music's power to console was widely trumpeted as giving it validity. Thirdly, I investigate the ways in which art music was claimed by some as supremely practical: not a pursuit for leisure hours in any sense of idleness, but an art that was of solid and practical, physical application. This includes the use of music in hospitals and convalescent homes, where some claimed it as a therapeutic treatment as valid as other medicine, which is the subject of the concluding section of this chapter.

Before proceeding, there is one element of the public discourse on the uses of music in war which falls outside the scope of this chapter, namely the interest shown in martial music. There was a number of articles relatively early in the war, for example, which investigated the historical uses of music in war, sometimes looking back to the Greeks and the Romans, eleventh-century Scottish warrior minstrels, the Napoleonic wars and more recent history.<sup>8</sup> These publications are noteworthy because they show an immediate wish to associate music with the prosecution of war, whether in stirring up battle ardour, soothing the troubled, celebrating victories or lamenting defeat. They often also address traditional British military song repertoire, investigating its ancestry and assessing its merits. There are two reasons for omitting this material from this study. The first (and primary) reason is that most discussions of this nature petered out fairly soon after the beginning of the war, and were in any case retrospective, an immediate solution perhaps to being required to provide copy for journals and newspapers that responded to the war but which did not necessitate extensive knowledge of the current situation. Secondly, where there *is* a tangible connection between soldiers of the day and music (for example in recruiting or

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Edmonstone Duncan (on the historical uses of music in wartime), 'Music and War,' *MT*, 1/9/1914, 572-4; J. F. Barnett, 'Martial Music,' *MMR*, 1/10/1914, 271-2; 'War Songs Past and Present,' *MH*, 1/11/1914, 396-400. Even as late as 1918, Alexander Mackenzie based a series of three Royal Institution lectures on 'War Music,' *MH*, 1/5/1918, 141.

marching situations, or entertaining soldiers) this will be considered in the following chapter.<sup>9</sup> Lastly, the almost universal use of music as a fund-raising tool for various war charities is such a significant site of public discourse that it will be treated in depth in chapter six.

#### 4.1 Music, Musicians and War: Moral Implications

The war imposed upon musicians a sense of moral challenge: to be a justifiable activity, music had to prove itself to be in some ways wholesome, moral and elevating. Such questions were not new to music, which had long since battled the typical nineteenth-century attitude described by Stanford as ‘the horrible idea that music is not a part of life, but a luxury, associated by them with femininity and long hair.’<sup>10</sup> *Music and Morals*, by the Rev. H. R. Haweis in 1871, whilst defending music as morally beneficial, was written in a climate which held the practice of art generally, and music in particular, to be susceptible to moral suspicion: ‘It is hardly fair not to recognise in society an under-current of belief to the effect that executive musicians are less distinguished for morality than their neighbours.’<sup>11</sup> Despite this view, music was seen as a vehicle for moral improvement throughout the nineteenth century, as seen in McGuire’s study of the tonic sol-fa movement.<sup>12</sup> I use this example to show that moral reflection on the activity of music, particularly for professional performers, was a well-established pattern of discourse, and although the level of suspicion of music as a profession in Victorian times had long since lessened, it is unsurprising that the war brought about a good deal of reflection as to the moral value of music.<sup>13</sup> Some of this was to do with the effect of music on its hearers and also its practitioners, as we will discuss below; some of it was in relation to taste and a hierarchy of musical classification: this aspect will be discussed in chapter five, in an examination of the debate about musical choices for soldier audiences. For others still, the moral reassessment caused by the war related more to trends within the

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<sup>9</sup> This is to leave aside the music provided in hospitals which will be briefly discussed here, as well as in chapter six when we consider specific musical schemes brought into being by the war.

<sup>10</sup> Stanford, *Interludes*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> H. R. Haweis, *Music and Morals* (London: Longman, 1923), 81. See also section 4.2.

<sup>12</sup> Charles McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-Fa Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). McGuire refers to tonic sol-fa as a ‘musical and moral empire,’ 17.

<sup>13</sup> The debate about music’s connection with ethics, and the question over its role to elevate and improve, was a long-standing one. This is clear, for example, from Ruth Solie’s discussion of music as it was represented in *Macmillan’s Magazine* over the period 1868-1883, which concludes that the moral element (music as both inspirer and revealer of moral character) was central to Victorian beliefs about music: Ruth A. Solie, *Music in Other Words* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 44-84. I am grateful to John Ling for his introduction to this topic.

musical profession itself.

One of those who used the public sphere to ponder the moral effect of the war on the musical profession was composer and founding member of the Society of Women Musicians, Katharine Eggar. Throughout the war there was an oft-repeated view that the war was an opportunity for a general stocktaking.<sup>14</sup> One result of this was the reassessment of the place allocated to British music, as we saw above, but this was by no means the only understanding of what form such stocktaking should take. In July 1915, Eggar wrote a lengthy article in the *Music Student* entitled, 'Materialism – A Menace to Music.' Prompted by the unusual conditions of wartime to reminisce about the different circumstances pertaining to musical life in pre-war England, a short year before – 'To cast one's thoughts back to last summer is to look at another existence'<sup>15</sup> – Eggar recalled the immediate shutdown of musical activity as the first response:

In the musical world, the immediate effect was of course upon externals. Everything stopped. Every musical event was cancelled. The usual busy show of musical activity was shut off by the relentless descent of the iron curtain of militarism; and music-makers and music-hearers ceased to exist, as such, in relation to each other.<sup>16</sup>

Somewhat exaggerated in her recollection (not everything was cancelled), Eggar's first-hand account of what the impact of the war felt like to an active musician is nonetheless valuable. Most interesting for our purpose here is that she goes on to note the mental impact of the war. This was, firstly, that 'the very making of music seemed an unlawful indulgence from which one shrank, or else a far-away joy that one could never hope to recapture,' and secondly, that such thoughts prompted a reassessment of the state of musical affairs:

Musical 'doings' were knocked flat; and being given instead some time for thinkings, our musical conscience apparently gave us pricks. We ventured to admit that the check to overproduction was salutary and that the reality which had been infused into music by contact with a fighting army was an inestimable benefit. We took stock, as it were, of our own musical assets, and found cause for both great pride and great humility. We breathed high intentions and promised ourselves great reforms. In fact, it seemed, some months ago, as if we were reaching a most wholesome state of mind.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Examples include Thomas Beecham and Robin Legge: 'We are now at a critical moment in our musical history; now is the time for an entire stocktaking of our position.' 'Mr Thomas Beecham Returns to the Attack,' *MG*, 11/12/1914, 12. Also, 'We are popularly supposed to be taking stock of our national means, musical as well as other, and mean to rectify all our old blunders after the war.' Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Looking Ahead,' *DT*, 3/3/1917, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Katharine E. Eggar, 'Materialism - A Menace to Music,' *MStu*, 1/7/1915, 209.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

For other commentators, the reassessment of British music caused by the war gave them the public forum to comment on music's perceived faults. For Robin Legge, this included the overproduction of vast numbers of music students with inadequate skills to pursue a musical career. Legge felt that wartime was the apposite moment to address the faults he perceived in the fabric of musical education in Britain. The changed circumstances would provide the opportunity to make improvements. He thought that the mental fog of self-satisfied, muddled thinking could be dissipated:

It is hardly exaggeration to suggest that a new era of self-criticism seems about to begin in our musical life. May it prove to be true! It is at least of great interest and importance that some of the leaders who are best known to the public, and incidentally best equipped by experience justifiably and authoritatively to speak out, are boldly declaring the plain, perhaps unpalatable truth – to a public that, by sheer inanition and from downright laziness, has become dulled in its faculties. [...] Of course, one is expected and prepared to be to their faults a little blind on occasion, especially now, but not always. Nor must the present be taken as establishing a precedent. The danger I would point out to be avoided is that the example of musical life in war time is likely to be lost if a number of our practical musicians do not realise now that the musical profession is not, and never was, their real destiny or calling. From the very nature of the case, there must be a large proportion of the year's students who enter at our colleges, &c., who can have the very remotest chance ever of earning the wages of a bricklayer by a legitimate use of the musical art.<sup>18</sup>

These remarks were prompted by the criticism we noted earlier by Beecham of the musical colleges, in which he described London conservatoires as 'old-established, perfectly useless institutions.'<sup>19</sup> The press discussion of such topics demonstrates commentators' interest in the possibilities of improvement in the fabric of musical life and practice, beginning with its students, but not confined to them, as Eggar's comments highlight. Katharine Eggar felt that music needed to wake up to a more honest recognition of worth, and not mistake superficial impressions for true worth. These debates were not new, of course, but the conditions of war meant that Eggar was interested in examining the real value of music, not its power to impress with size or rarity of instrument, for example.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Robin Legge, 'British Music: Artists and the Public,' *DT*, 6/2/1915, 6.

<sup>19</sup> 'Mr Thomas Beecham: The Prospects of British Music,' *MG*, 5/12/1914, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Eggar put it as follows: 'The question which it behoves music-lovers to ask ourselves is – What are the relative values of the Material and the Immaterial in music? [...] By analogy ... "Which do I reckon on to make the greatest impression – my wife's clothes or my wife?" A great many of us have an entirely false idea of the value of music's clothes. A great many of us are seriously impressed if a score has forty staves, if an orchestra has a hundred and forty performers, if a new work requires three recondite instruments which have never been heard before. These are the people who can see no possibility of victory for David unless he don Saul's armour; who cannot believe that with a sling and a stone he may prevail. They cannot trust music, pure and simple, to conquer; they must combine it with stage accessories, with acting, with dancing, with (at the very least) words, before it has any meaning for them.' Katherine Eggar, 'Materialism,' 210.



More than this, Eggar contended that if one took the opportunity to examine the true worth of music – ‘our present trials are teaching us such very vital lessons as to the values of the hidden springs of character that now, if ever, should be the moment to get a true estimate of music’ – then music could lead one to the Infinite, after Carlyle:

If we can but trust in music for its own inherent virtue, not for its accessories and trappings, we set it free to work its own peculiar magic; for although we are said to turn to music because it ‘takes us out of ourselves,’ it would be truer to say that it takes us *into* ourselves – into our true selves: takes us into those un-material regions where thought is born, to that borderland of recollection where the soul may remember something of what she has left.

Carlyle, in a moment of inspiration, has said that music takes us to the edge of the infinite and lets us look over [...] What more could be demanded of music? How immeasurably more splendid that she should open the windows of the soul to Infinity and Eternity, than that she should be associated with vile passions or limited to commonplace experiences. It lies with us to approach her in that belief.<sup>21</sup>

These moral concerns are directly related to the concerns over Germany’s moral degradation that we examined above: Germany was thought to have lost its way and the unease that many felt with the developments in German music, mirrored in the ‘frightfulness’ and the desire for military domination, was symptomatic of a moral vacuum. The debate over British musical opportunities during the war contains implicitly within it a warning over the danger of losing one’s way morally. The moral element is overlaid in much of the debate by more practical concern, and a wish in many for escapism, but it is nonetheless present.

One of Eggar’s other concerns, early on in the war, had been that spending one’s time in music-making seemed inappropriate during wartime, and other commentators expressed similar opinions. Ernest Newman, not long after the war’s beginning, recalled his feelings at the time:

In face of the tremendous realities that life suddenly opened out before us all, music seemed to me utterly remote and unreal. It was not merely that to sit at home and pamper the soul with delicate, sweet sounds while the blood of Europe was being poured out, appeared as callous as to be fiddling while Rome was burning; it was that the critical appraisal of music – the occupation in which some of us have to spend our lives – suddenly took on an almost ludicrous air of insignificance [...] To sit down solemnly and write at length about such things [...] seemed as absurd as for a family to be quarrelling a whole day about the relative merits of the humming of this insect or that in the garden, while inside the house some one was dying in slow agony.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.* (Emphasis in original).

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Newman, ‘The Artist and the People,’ *MT*, 1/10/1914, 605.

Newman recognised that such feelings were likely to be short-lived: the survival of art throughout human existence revealed it as a necessary of human existence. However, without supplying any evidence for his views, Newman may well have been (consciously or unconsciously) justifying his own involvement in music:

Art would not have been evolved as it has been through all the centuries were it not as vital a part of our being as the desire for food or for love; and when the normal balance of our mental life has been restored, we artists will come to think, as before, that art, in its own way, is as real as what the world calls reality.<sup>23</sup>

He was aware, however, that the music he had been accustomed to rely on – for his living as well as his joy – seemed inadequate to the purpose when he was brought face to face with the harsh facts of war, as revealed when he visited a makeshift hospital for wounded soldiers. The experience gave him an appreciation for music normally outside his sphere of criticism. Listening to an organist entertain the wounded, he noted:

I found myself not only tolerant but, in some inexplicable way, positively appreciative, of music that at any other time would have moved me to derision. The men had sent up a list of the music they would like to hear: it was mostly of the ‘Tipperary’ and ‘Lost Chord’ type [...] To forget the place and the scene, as one managed to do for an odd moment, was to become an artist again, critical of the music as music, and contemptuous of it when it was artistically bad; but when one turned one's eyes again on the beds below and saw the men drinking in the strains and occasionally joining in them, the worst music lost its power to annoy.<sup>24</sup>

Newman's remarks reveal the casual snobbery which marked much discourse in his time: in his later remarks in the same article, he notes that working-class men were ‘irreflective’ with a mental life inadequate to be truly artistic, as they shunned solitude.<sup>25</sup> Not all commentators shared this superficial judgment, and a wider knowledge of the shared musical tastes and interests across class barriers was one of the many interesting changes in attitude caused by the war. Whether or not such broadening of attitudes outlasted the war is a matter of debate, which we will examine briefly in the concluding chapter. During the war itself, many who performed to military audiences found a knowledge and appreciation of classical

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> His generalisations were perhaps not unusual at the time, but one of the many revelations of the war was the wide interest shown in all sections of society in music and literature sometimes perceived to be only for an imagined elite. Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) investigates the literary life of the soldier. Jonathan Rose includes music in his study *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* and reveals a level of intellectual curiosity and knowledge that would shame Ernest Newman, were he only aware of it: Rose, *Intellectual Life*; see especially 196-206 for an examination of music.

music that surprised them, as chapter five will demonstrate.

The war had caused a national outbreak of moral justification – Britain was engaged in a moral struggle, of good against evil, light against dark, democracy and decency against mindless militarism.<sup>26</sup> It is no surprise, therefore, that similar attitudes about morality and elevation were found in the discussion of music's rôle during the war. In a retrospective article at the beginning of 1916, the *Monthly Musical Record* noted:

The present strife is not merely a colossal international struggle, but there is a higher moral aim behind it all – that of a better understanding not only between nation and nation, but between man and man all the world over. Meanwhile the war (sad that such an antidote was needed) has united people in a most wonderful way. No longer do we hear of petty professional jealousies, any more than we hear un-Christian remarks between sect and sect. In many ways the artist, poet and musician have found a truer level. In some cases he loomed too large in the public view, whilst in many quarters he is emerging into a juster recognition of his value and power. Music has undergone sterner tests than this, for even month after month of hardy trenchwork has not obliterated but rather increased the love of music.<sup>27</sup>

Such idealism, perhaps necessary to inculcate public unity and to maintain morale – and public morale was an absolutely key element in winning the war, as John Bourne has noted<sup>28</sup> – was a recurrent thread in wartime discourse about the moral implications of music. Lancelot of the *Referee* felt strongly that art was a moral and civilising force which would counteract negative characteristics, and that war would reveal this:

Briefly, art, the product of the finer part of man's nature, reacts and refines that nature. Its weeds are weak sentimentality and the poisons of its excesses are insidious but it is the antithesis of, if not the most powerful antidote to, coarseness and brutality, and, above all, to destruction. Few people realise how closely allied are coarseness and brutality. Did they do so, they would have more faith in the practical social value of objects of art and good music.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See for example Lloyd George's oft-quoted speech of September 1914: 'Fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a Nation – the great peaks we had forgotten of honour, duty, patriotism; and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of sacrifice, pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven.' (Quoted in MacDonagh, *In London*, 27, and in Gregory, *Last Great War*, 152.) *King Albert's Book* is a further example: see Materialities 2 and 5. Although it is often assumed that there was a rush to go to war, and such exhortation might therefore have been unnecessary, Adrian Gregory has pointed out that, in August 1914 for example, crowds demonstrating in favour of hostilities were definitely the minority: 'The evidence for mass enthusiasm at the time is surprisingly weak' (Gregory, *Last Great War*, 27 and 11). Rather, political motives about the balance of power and the maintenance of liberal democracy, real motives that historians have since justified, needed to carry weight with a general public who were in the main, reluctant to fight and did so out of a sense of duty rather than in an outbreak of enthusiasm.

<sup>27</sup> 'Editorial,' *MMR*, 1/1/1916, 1.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. Bourne, *Britain and the Great War 1914-1918* (London: Edward Arnold). See chapter 9, 'Comradeship, Discipline and Morale,' 199-224, and in particular 202: 'That a catastrophic national defeat was avoided was due in no small part to the resilience of civilian morale.'

<sup>29</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: War and its Antidote,' *Ref*, 30/8/1914, 8.

This was written within a few weeks of the outbreak of war and at a time when the musical world was still reeling from the shock of the conflict. Commentators were attempting to formulate for music both an ideological position that would enable musical activity to proceed with justification and a practical position that would reveal what thinkers had always known, namely that there was a 'practical social value of objects of art and good music,' as Lancelot had written. Justifying musical activity on moral grounds was, of course, a practice of long-standing. As Alan Bartley has noted, 'The perception of music as a civilising force was common in Victorian society,' not unrelated, he notes, to the fact that music, being commonly used in religious rites, was therefore perceived to have 'moral and uplifting connotations.'<sup>30</sup> But these wartime uses and experiences of music are more related to the centrality of common feeling that music engendered: the 'sharing,' as Bartley has called it, in his explicit challenge to those who saw upper-class patronage of working-class musical events as a far more positive thing than reinforcing dominant class positions.<sup>31</sup>

Lancelot's emphasis on 'coarseness and brutality' requiring an antidote is clearly connected to Bourdieu's ideas. I noted above that Bourdieu sets 'lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile' in specific opposition to the 'sacred sphere of culture.'<sup>32</sup> Commentators such as Lancelot make a direct connection between the nature of man and the art that encourages the best characteristics to flourish, urging his readers to encourage the best art to produce the best from man's nature. 'Best,' in Lancelot's opinion, clearly means his own version of high culture (a culture he wanted to ensure was kept free from its potential weeds such as 'weak sentimentality').<sup>33</sup> This is in contrast to the changing views of Ernest Newman who, being faced with the reality of wounded soldiers and their musical taste, was able to see that music he found both 'coarse' and 'sloppy' gave as much spiritual nourishment to the soldiers as he himself would find in Bach or Wagner.<sup>34</sup> Commentators then confronted their own prejudices and tastes when forced to consider music's role and its moral implications in wartime, and whilst some were able to adjust their thinking, there were those, like Legge, who were uncompromising that their taste was the correct taste, and sought to impose that

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<sup>30</sup> Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, xxx.

<sup>33</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: War and its Antidote,' 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The Artist and the People', *MT*, 1/10/1914, 605. Newman's comments are analysed further in chapter five below.

dominant taste on his readership.

We have seen that the reassessment of music's value caused by the war gave some commentators reason to ponder its worth in moral terms. As a by-product of these considerations, some went on to question the musical world as a whole, seeking to use the opportunity of the hiatus in normal conditions as a means to redirect misplaced energies or wrong emphases. But these theoretical concerns took second place to the discourse surrounding the actual, practical uses of music that were either revealed or brought to the fore by the war. One such example, expressed by Katharine Eggar amongst others, was that people turned to music for consolation and as a relief from the war.

## 4.2 The Use of Music for Consolation

It is well understood that music played an important role in consoling the bereaved in the immediate post-war period, as studies of Armistice Day rituals have shown.<sup>35</sup> Less attention has been paid, however, to the ways in which music was seen as a great consoler during the war itself. One example of the power of music to benefit the bereaved as well as others suffering through the war was Clara Butt's series of successive performances of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in 1916. The scheme was expressly designed to give people a source of consolation in times of bereavement and sorrow, and that consolation was specifically spiritual, since the main focus of the concerts was Cardinal Newman's text for *Gerontius*, directly addressing the fate of the soul after death. Butt herself made this clear: 'In the midst of this tremendous upheaval, when youth is dying for us, I want the people to come to the Queen's Hall, and, with the help of Cardinal Newman's wonderful poem and Elgar's music, to realise some spiritual truths.'<sup>36</sup> Unprecedented in type and scope, there were six consecutive performances of *Gerontius*. The concerts also included two of the movements of Elgar's newest composition, *Spirit of England*, 'To Women,' and 'For the Fallen.' Although additionally designed as a fund-raising event for the Red Cross, the project was motivated by Clara Butt's wish to provide spiritual comfort:

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<sup>35</sup> See for example Richards' chapter, 'Imperial Days: Armistice Day and Empire Day' in *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876–1955* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). See also Rachel Cowgill's study of armistice music and the BBC, 'Canonizing Remembrance'.

<sup>36</sup> Unidentified press cutting from May 1916 in the 'Press Cutting Books' at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, reproduced in Foreman, 'Winnowing Fan', 104.

The week of music arranged by Mme. Clara Butt at Queen's Hall was designed to have a special significance beyond the fact that its chief object was to contribute to the funds of the British Red Cross Society. Of even more importance, in Mme. Butt's opinion, is the need of the people to find consolation in music of which spirituality is the dominating impulse.<sup>37</sup>

Butt herself felt very strongly that the war was precisely the occasion to provide spiritual sustenance through music, as the following extract quoted by Lewis Foreman illustrates:

Don't you think that people will be glad to hear something which is definitely spiritual? Isn't it time [...] that art in England should try to express the new attitude of the English mind towards life after death? I feel so strongly that one performance a year in London for a work like "Gerontius" is utterly ridiculous [...] I cannot tell you how I feel the need for something in the nature of a protest or a challenge. We are a nation in mourning. Life as it existed two years ago has ceased [...] My point is this: the greater things in life should never be neglected by art; but to neglect them now, in a time like this – in a time of such sorrow and pain – to limit art only to amusement – this is bad. And I am not afraid to go much further. I am sure that no nation can be great which is not religious. I am perfectly certain that nearly all our tragic blunders – perhaps all of them – can be traced to our materialism, for materialism breeds apathy and self-satisfaction.<sup>38</sup>

Her efforts raised over £5000 for the Red Cross but also received a good deal of press attention, not least for the unusual but ultimately successful trial of putting on six identical concerts in a row.<sup>39</sup>

Rachel Cowgill's analysis of Elgar's Opus 80 *The Spirit of England* is particularly illuminating with regard to Butt's choice of Elgar's new pieces alongside *Gerontius*. Binyon's poems had already made their powerful appeal to a nation increasingly persuaded of the necessity of standing up for Belgium, victim, so it was felt, of unprovoked aggression from a nation lacking in the most basic morals. Cowgill's research has demonstrated the confluence of these national feelings, Binyon's humanistic ideals, the work of Ruskin, which Colvin refers to in his initial attempts to persuade Elgar to set something as a 'requiem', and the anthology that poet laureate Robert Bridges had made, called (significantly), *The Spirit of Man*.<sup>40</sup> In addition to all

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<sup>37</sup> 'In the Concert Room,' *MMR*, 1/6/1916, 172.

<sup>38</sup> Unidentified press cutting from May 1916 in the 'Press Cutting Books' at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, reproduced in Foreman, 'Winnowing Fan', 104.

<sup>39</sup> The week also received critical attention for the first London performances of Elgar's *Spirit of England*. For example, Legge's colleague at the *DT* noted: 'Elgar's oratorio is not to stand entirely alone. For as a fact we are to hear a hitherto unheard composition ... entitled 'For the Fallen' for tenor solo and orchestra. All who recall 'Carillon' and 'A Voice in the Desert' will not need to be reminded of what Elgar's musical impressions of the war have been, and will welcome a new impression, if I may use the term.' *Musicus*, 'A Gerontius Festival,' 4/3/1916, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' 330-331.

of these factors influencing Elgar's compositional activity over the three pieces of *The Spirit of England*, Cowgill's revealing analysis of Elgar's re-use of the first stanza of 'The Fourth of August,' highlighting the connection between purging and purifying, between spirit and soul, demonstrates the latent spirituality in Binyon's originally secular poem. The deep, spiritual meaning that Elgar creates out of an already meaningful set of poems, combined with musical references to *The Dream of Gerontius*, as Cowgill has shown,<sup>41</sup> all demonstrate the appropriateness of Butt's choices for her concert series, and the foundation of spiritual consolation that may be seen in even apparently secular pieces.

Listening to overtly spiritual music was not the limit of the consolatory power of music. In fact, few people specifically linked consolation to spiritual matters in the way of organised or biblical religion. Instead, they looked to music to provide something far less specifically tied to individual belief systems, something more nebulous, even quasi-mystical. For some commentators the relief offered by music was of a more physical nature, and these commentators used the language of 'refreshment' and 'invigoration;' such physical benefits will be discussed below.

For music to be valid in a time of war, it needed to be of genuine service; it needed to demonstrate its worth, and at a time when bereavement became the daily experience of many, any such claims for music needed to be justified. Hubert Parry, as the head of an institution which was devoted to educating musicians, experienced as strongly as anyone the necessity of proving that the work of the college needed to have demonstrable worth even in wartime. In his first address after the outbreak of war, he seems particularly conscious of the necessity to allow musicians a claim to valour and masculinity.<sup>42</sup> Thus he appears to take particular pride in those Royal College of

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<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, 332-336.

<sup>42</sup> Justifying music as a suitable pursuit for men was a matter of long debate: see for example an article in the *MT*, 'Manliness in Music,' 1/8/1889, 460-1. Scholars who have examined the question of the implied effeminacy of music and the potential problems that raised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain include Byron Adams, 'Elgar's Later Oratorios: Roman Catholicism, Decadence and the Wagnerian Dialectic of Shame and Grace,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, ed. Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 81-105. Adams notes that the Wilde trials of 1895 had the 'dire' effect of fostering 'a fallacious connection in the popular mind between effeminacy and homosexuality,' an 'untenable assumption [which] only hardened the social opprobrium towards musicians and left several generations of English composers – regardless of sexual orientation – to repudiate any stylistic elements [...] that might suggest either decadence or aestheticism' (88). Adams's work is also useful for his perceptive points about the connection of Victorian medical terminology relating to women's psychology (the negative connotations attached to hysteria, sentiment, and so on) with criticisms of music deemed to be 'hysterical.' Adams quotes E. A. Baughan, writing in 1906 that he preferred the 'massive manliness' of

Music students who had volunteered for the forces:

We feel a thrill of regard for them. It gives a comfortable feeling of admiration for our fellow-countrymen when we see them moved by fine and honourable motives to face the awful conditions of modern warfare to risk their lives, and sometimes even worse, for generous ideals. We like the College to be represented by such spirited young people.<sup>43</sup>

However, Parry was also very conscious that the specialist skills of the first-class musician were not easily replaced, and he was also concerned about the perils of active participation in warfare for those who made their living writing or performing. He seems almost to argue that the especially talented should not be sacrificed.<sup>44</sup> In voicing these thoughts, he was perhaps aiming to convince himself of the value of music as an occupation. Highlighting that music fulfilled the role of consoler at such times was one of the ways in which he did this:

It is a time like this which tests the genuineness of our work. The art we follow is fit to be pursued and cultivated even by the side of the greatest doings of active life. Its highest guarantee is that it should be capable of being a divine consoler in times of most piteous distress.<sup>45</sup>

Parry's deliberations reveal the complexity of the issues: the perceived necessity to justify music as an occupation in wartime and an equal belief that it was indeed justified by its ability to console.

That music would be of especial use in time of war was part of the reason Sidney Colvin and others put such pressure on Elgar to agree to setting Laurence Binyon's poems, *For the Fallen*, part of *The Spirit of England*. Elgar's hesitation was due to the fact that Cyril Rootham had already had a setting of *For the Fallen* accepted for publication by Novello, Elgar's own publisher.<sup>46</sup> Binyon wrote strongly in reply to Elgar's explanation that, disappointed as he was, he could not continue with the same poem:

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Handel to the 'hysterical prostration of the confessional' that he found in Elgar. E. A. Baughan, *Music and Musicians* (London: Bodley Head, 1906), 202-3, quoted in Adams, 'Elgar's Later Oratorios,' 89.

<sup>43</sup> Parry, *College Addresses*, 216.

<sup>44</sup> This is evident in a letter to Vaughan Williams he wrote in early 1915, 'There are certain individuals who are capable of serving their country in certain exceptional and very valuable ways, and they are not on the same footing as ordinary folks, who if they are exterminated are just one individual gone and no more. You have already served your country in many notable and exceptional ways and are likely to do so again; and such folks should be shielded from risk rather than exposed to it.' Quoted in Bernard Benoliel, *Parry Before Jerusalem: Studies in his Life and Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 129. The casual way in which the 'extermination' of 'ordinary folk' is seen of no matter does not paint Parry in a favourable light, but elsewhere his general compassion and lack of vindictive nature are evident.

<sup>45</sup> Parry, *College Addresses*, 226.

<sup>46</sup> For a fuller discussion of the issues surrounding the difficult inception of Elgar's version of the poem, see John Norris, 'The Spirit of Elgar: Crucible of Remembrance,' in Foreman ed., *Oh, My Heroes!* especially 239-244.



My dear Sir Edward,

Your words about my poem touch me deeply. My disappointment matters nothing, keen as it is: but think of England, of the English-speaking peoples, in whom the common blood stirs now as it never did before; think of the awful casualty lists that are coming, & the losses in more & more homes; think of the thousands who will be craving to have their grief glorified & lifted up & transformed by an art like yours – and though I have little understanding of music, as you know, I understand that craving when words alone seem all too insufficient & inexpressive – think of what you are withholding from your countrymen & women. Surely it would be wrong to let them lose this help & consolation.<sup>47</sup>

Binyon's words focus on the potential of music as agent of consolation – 'grief glorified and lifted up and transformed by art' – and this potential continued to be widely discussed through the war. In 1915, Lancelot of the *Referee* wrote:

Thousands of our people are mourning the death of husbands, sons, brothers, and friends. The solace of hundreds in their sorrows and trials is music.<sup>48</sup>

A year and a half later, the same commentator was reiterating the same point: 'There never was a time when the soothing and consolatory influence of music were more needed.'<sup>49</sup>

Such conclusions about music's power to console were widespread and almost unquestioned. November 1914 saw the *Musical Standard* noting that 'the sweet consolation of good music' was 'even more needed.'<sup>50</sup> Understandable enough in the early days of the war, even after the bitter struggle of the Somme and the increasing awareness of the true human cost of the war, listening to good music was described by Robin Legge of the *Daily Telegraph* as 'a great compassionate, consoling hand upon our racked hearts.'<sup>51</sup>

Commentators also noted the consoling power of music through its ability to distract the mind temporarily from its burdens, with serious commentators like Legge and lighter journalism expressing similar ideas. In 'The Letters of Eve' in *The Tatler*, underneath the satire of the ironical glances at how society women were coping with the war, there runs a genuine undercurrent of emotion and a serious recognition of

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<sup>47</sup> Laurence Binyon to Edward Elgar, 27/3/1915, quoted in J. N. Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 288-289.

<sup>48</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: An Uncouth Tongue,' *Ref*, 28/3/1915, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: The Musician's Greatest Enemy,' *Ref*, 17/9/1916, 7.

<sup>50</sup> 'Editorial,' *MS*, 28/11/1914, 366.

<sup>51</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Armistice Music,' *DT*, 23/11/1918, 4.

the horrors of war.<sup>52</sup> Music is specifically mentioned in these instances for its potential to soothe: 'Music's *such* a help, isn't it? I mean it does make you forget all the horrid things quicker than anything, and it doesn't seem so awfully incongruous, somehow, listening to really lovely music no matter how depressing the war news is.'<sup>53</sup>

Part of the reason for the stress on music's ability to console was no doubt the continuing necessity of claiming a legitimate and valid space for music in time of war: the reality of death or maiming for so many might have pushed music to one side but instead, commentators and practitioners alike found that art music had a significant role to play. Whether or not the consolatory powers of music brought new audiences is another matter: a preliminary examination of the commentary on the topic might seem to conclude that music did indeed receive greater attention.<sup>54</sup> Certainly, an increased audience for chamber music was noted by many, although its relatively low cost and simplicity of requirements in terms of venue may well have been significant factors in this.<sup>55</sup> This recognition of what appeared to be increased audiences may in fact be a belated recognition that chamber music had maintained a vibrant and living place in British musical lives, compositional as well as performative, long before the Cobbett competitions were credited with reviving interest in the medium, as Christina Bashford has demonstrated. Her research has identified 'a largely invisible but significant musical tradition [...] a subculture that had more coherence and significance than the standard histories assume, and one that has been repeatedly written off through unhelpful comparisons with what was said to be more widespread activity in Germany.'<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For example: 'War's such a fearfully absorbing thing, isn't it? So absorbing, indeed, that sometimes I almost begin to think that if it goes on much longer men'll really positively almost forget all the softer side of life, the dancing, dallying, frothy, frivolous side. They've seen, and they're seeing – aren't they? – a side of life which they're risking all things just to prevent us seeing. And when you've been deep down like that, when you've seen behind the curtain, lifted up the lid, peered into the abyss – well, as one of those too many whose nerve is nearly broken said to me, "You can't forget it. Nothing will ever be quite the same again."' *Tatler*, 'Letters of Eve', 1/12/15, 256.

<sup>53</sup> *Tatler*, 'Letters of Eve', 29/9/1915, 400.

<sup>54</sup> A survey of such matters would be a fruitful avenue for further enquiry.

<sup>55</sup> For example, a correspondent to the *DT* referred to 'an encouraging sign of a true renaissance of chamber music among English players.' J. Campbell McInnes, 'Folk-Song Phantasies,' *DT*, 1/4/1916, 6. The 1918 *Era Annual* in its retrospective of 1917, noted that the year had seen 'a remarkable increase in public performances of chamber music,' and it named five quartets and three trios regularly active in London alone, as well as a new quartet hoping to specialise in British music, founded by Rhoda Backhouse. Chamber music also benefitted from the continued support of W. W. Cobbett who had been known before the war for his competitions for chamber music. It is also noteworthy that during the war, Elgar turned his attention to chamber music.

<sup>56</sup> Christina Bashford, 'Historiography and Invisible Musics: Domestic Chamber Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 63/2, 2010, 302 and 306.

Although, as Bashford notes, the chamber music tradition was largely invisible in private life before the war, it certainly became much more publicly visible during the war. Concerts were created in places where no provision had existed for the art music lover pre-war, and this was particularly the case with chamber music. It also had lesser demands of manpower. One example may be seen in the instigation of lunchtime chamber music series.<sup>57</sup> These received increasingly large audiences, as a report from Sydney Nicholson, looking back at Manchester's musical reaction to the war from the vantage point of October 1918, demonstrates:

These concerts may be said to have created a new public, largely composed of business men, many of whom had probably hardly ever been concert-goers before, but who now attend week after week as a matter of course; and the performers one and all declare that the audiences have become among the best and most critical to be found anywhere.<sup>58</sup>

Such concerts proved that art music – and the Manchester series was ‘of the highest quality, and “severely classical” [with] no pandering to popular taste’<sup>59</sup> – could draw and keep an audience in time of war. Part of the rhetoric surrounding the justification for musical activity was not merely that it appealed to audiences, however, but that it was of demonstrable, practicable, use, as the next section investigates.

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<sup>57</sup> The Music in War-Time Committee, which will appear in chapter six, ran various series of ‘Luncheon Hour’ Concerts in such places as Westminster Central Hall. See Record of the MIWTC, IWM.

<sup>58</sup> Sydney Nicholson, ‘War-Time Music: A Northern Effort,’ *MH*, 1/10/1918, 302-3. The Manchester concerts to which he refers were lunchtime concerts, a series designed to raise funds for the provision of engagements for musicians who were struggling without their regular employment and at the same time, to give musical entertainments to wounded troops and other bodies of soldiers. This type of work will be discussed in chapter six.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

## Materiality 7 Music in No. 15 General Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt

No 15 General Hospital in Alexandria is a good example of a thriving musical world in one of the Eastern theatres of war. The hospital had a prolific and successful Musical and Dramatic Society, facilitated by talented staff, and led by actor and theatre director Nugent Monck.<sup>60</sup> Monck produced and directed five Shakespeare plays in his time in Alexandria, all with Elizabethan musical accompaniment, as well as giving modern short plays, for which one playbill notes, 'The Music is by Rebikoff, Schubert, and Debussy.'<sup>61</sup> The society celebrated in music the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death, in 1916, and gave regular concerts: the programme for one such appears on the next page.

This programme is an excellent example of the type of mingling of various types of music and entertainment that I discuss below. It also reflects questions of taste that are further explored in chapter five. A comic song sits alongside folk song, art song, and chamber arrangements of orchestral music. No doubt Nugent Monck's wide experience of the theatre would have helped him to gauge well how to balance programmes to appeal to the diverse audiences for his productions, being a mixture of convalescent men, serving hospital personnel and civilians.

The Society's work was not only appreciated by its audiences at the hospital, but was welcomed by the local community: 'The music [...] included a beautiful air of Campion's newly set for four voices; and the lyrics were sung with great charm [...] To Pte Monck must be largely reserved the credit for a production always admirable, and in its music and decoration, and [...] acting [...] of a very high order indeed. The work of this Society is so rare in the Army and in Egypt, that it is with the deepest interest that we await the next production.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Monck had been trained in both music and drama at the Royal Academy of Music, and became well known for his work on Shakespeare produced according to the ideas of William Poel, at the Maddermarket Theatre which he established in Norwich after the war. Eric Salmon, 'Monck (Walter) Nugent Bligh (1877–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 1/5/2013, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57168>. Wellcome Library, RAMC, 1269/6/16.

<sup>61</sup> Playbill for 'Four Short Plays,' Wellcome Library, RAMC, 1269/6/16.

<sup>62</sup> An unnamed newspaper review of *Twelfth Night* from 1915. Wellcome Library, RAMC, 1269/6/16.

P R O G R A M M E

— OF —

# CONCERT

TO BE GIVEN BY THE STAFF OF NO.15 GENERAL HOSPITAL

~~TO THE PATIENTS ON FRIDAY 12th MAY 1916 IN WARD C1D AT 6 P.M.~~

- |    |             |   |                             |
|----|-------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Folk Song.  | Bushes and Briars.                        | The Choir.                  |
| 2. | Song.       | The Sound of the Drum.                    | L/Cpl.W.Ryding.             |
| 3. | Comic Song. | I put on my coat and went home.           | E/M.Lister.                 |
| 4. | Folk Song.  | Strawberry Fair.                          | The Choir.                  |
| 5. | Song.       | The Song of the Bow.                      | Sgt.Morrison.               |
| 6. | Duet.       | The Keys of Heaven.                       | Capt.& Mrs Haig.            |
| 7. | Overture.   | "Midsummer Night's Dream.<br>Mendelssohn. | Capt.Darling &<br>Delmege.  |
| 8. | A Foreword. |   | Lt-Col.H.E.R.James,<br>C.B. |

THE CLOWNS' PLAY.

From "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare,  
First printed in 1600.

The Players in the order of their speaking.

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Quince, a carpenter.....               | S/M.Lister.                  |
| Bottom, a weaver.....                  | Sgt.Stearn.                  |
| Flute, a bellowsmender.....            | Cpl.Smithson.                |
| Starveling, a tailor.....              | Cpl.Dixon.                   |
| Snout, a tinker.....                   | L/Cpl.Job.                   |
| Snug, a joiner.....                    | Pte.Gunning.                 |
| Puck, a Robin Goodfellow.....          | Pte.Allen T.C.               |
| Theseus, Duke of Athens.....           | Pte.Symes.                   |
| Philostrate, master of the revels..... | Pte.Thompson.                |
| The Singer.....                        | L/Cpl.Ryding.                |
| Two Courtiers.....                     | {Pte.Powney.<br>(Pte.Cass R. |

The Song in the Play by Tobias Hulme(1605)  
The Dance to the tune of "Greensleeves".

Produced by Pte. Nugent Monck. R.A.M.C.

G O D       S A V E       T H E       K I N G .

Programme of a concert given to patients in the No 15 General Hospital Alexandria, 12 May 1916. RAMC collection at the Wellcome Library (RAMC, 1269/6/16).



### 4.3 Taking Art off its Pedestal: Music and its Practical Uses<sup>63</sup>

The War has taught us many things, and surely none more convincing than the practical value of music.<sup>64</sup>

The war caused performers like pianist Mark Hambourg to seek ways in which their art could be put to practical use at a time of national stress. Hambourg made a welcome discovery:

In spite of the war, music still had its uses in the world. To soothe the weary soldier; to distract the anxious civilian; to charm the shillings out of much tried purses for the ever-increasing wants of the war; in these activities lay the help and consolation of the arts in those years of gloom and horror. Artists who, like myself, were precluded from military service owing to physical disability, were only too glad to find that the work they were competent to do was valuable.<sup>65</sup>

I will address the uses of music for charitable purposes below, but Hambourg's summary is a useful one. Not only does it spell out the sense of relief and renewed confidence that musicians experienced when they discovered that their life's work still had meaning and could contribute to the overall war effort, but also because it highlights in passing the plight of those who, disbarred from military service, still wanted to serve in some respect. The composer Eugene Goossens (also becoming known at this time as a conductor, through his work for Thomas Beecham) was unable to join the forces because of a heart condition, but many such musicians felt the need to show that they were of use in some way and not shirking.<sup>66</sup> Not all musicians felt the same. Arnold Bax, for example, 'certainly did not identify with the conflict.'<sup>67</sup> Bax sought medical advice early on as to the best way to avoid military service. When conscription arrived in early 1916, and was on various occasions extended from then until the end of the war, Bax was regularly exempted from military service.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> The reference to taking art off its pedestal comes from Percy Scholes in the *MStud* and will be examined below: Percy Scholes, 'Learn to be English,' *MStud*, 1/4/1916, 210.

<sup>64</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: A Great Work,' *Ref*, 15/12/1918, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Hambourg, *From Piano to Forte*, 242.

<sup>66</sup> Carole Rosen notes that 'Like all young men, they [Eugene Goossens and his fellow quartet players] wore khaki armbands over their dress clothes at concerts to signify that they were in the process of joining, or had been rejected by, the Army.' Carole Rosen, *The Goossens: A Musical Century* (London: Deutsch, 1993), 42.

<sup>67</sup> Lewis Foreman, *Bax: A Composer and his Times* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 133.

<sup>68</sup> Foreman, *Bax*, 141. Foreman also notes that, 'Yet on a material plane Bax appears to have suffered neither socially nor financially through the war, for although no pacifist, he spent it, as he spent most of his life, doing exactly what he wanted to do' (151). Foreman's biography implies that the occasional

Whilst some, like Bax, used music as a distraction from unpleasant thoughts of obligation or conflict, for others, the war was a chance to show that music could be genuinely useful, as Percy Scholes writing in 1916 demonstrates:

Art has precisely the same mission as a brick wall or a suet pudding: – to be of real service to mankind. We must take Art off her pedestal and set her to work to scrub floors, make shells, or bread, or boots, or dolls, or whatever people may want.<sup>69</sup>

Few prior to the war would have equated the mission of art with a suet pudding, and perhaps not that many even during the war. The expression of such thoughts, however, is a useful indicator of the exceptional circumstances of wartime. Scholes himself was passionate about making music of direct relevance, and spent a good deal of time during the war giving gramophone-based lectures to troops, introducing them to art music, an attitude of open-mindedness about music that he continued after the war in his well-known work on music appreciation.<sup>70</sup>

While few people expressed themselves as strongly as Scholes, the justificatory rhetoric that we examined at the beginning of this chapter is indicative of the perceived need for art music to earn its place at such a time. We will examine in the next section the therapeutic uses of music during the war, one specific example of the way in which the war highlighted the practical application of music. Whilst it is no doubt true that musicians must have believed that music was of practical use to varying degrees *before* the war, there was something specific about wartime conditions that generated more of a realisation as to the importance of the debate. The fact that art music was seen to have a proven role at the time of conflict allowed it to step

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Bax relative who had volunteered for the army and was enthusiastically vocal about it, was received with coldness and even bewilderment by the Bax family.

<sup>69</sup> Percy Scholes, 'Learn to be English,' *MStuð*, 1/4/1916, 210.

<sup>70</sup> Scholes' wartime work with troops coalesced into his 1919 publication, *Listener's Guide to Music*. Percy A. Scholes, *The Listener's Guide to Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1919). His wartime experiences fed into his wish to make music accessible to all, which became a mainstay of his life's work, alongside academic study (including a doctoral dissertation on the Puritan in Music, 1934). His magnum opus was the *Oxford Companion to Music* (1938). He has been described as 'an unusual combination of teacher, popularizing lecturer, journalist, critic and scholar.' John Owen Ward, 'Scholes, Percy A.,' *Grove Music Online*, accessed 30/1/2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25033>. For a detailed examination of Scholes's methodology and ideas in music appreciation, see Estelle Jorgensen, 'Percy Scholes on Music Appreciation: Another View,' *British Journal of Music Education* 4/2, 1987, 139-156. See also Megan Pricor's work: Megan Pricor, 'To Catch the World': Percy Scholes and the English Musical Appreciation Movement 1918–1939,' *Context: Journal of Music Research* 15/16, 1998, 61-71. Regarding other uses of the gramophone in wartime, Jay Winter has pointed out that recordings of popular music, linked home and fighting fronts by a shared culture, resulting in an 'extraordinary marriage between the civilian and military markets.' Winter, 'Popular Culture,' 335. Materiality 8 looks at wartime use of the gramophone.

forward to a greater degree than it had before. By the end of the war Lancelot was writing that the war had 'taught us many things, and surely none more convincing than the practical value of music.'<sup>71</sup>

Does this imply that before the war, music was tacitly or otherwise held to be impractical, of no practical use? In view of the wartime rhetoric, perhaps the inevitable conclusion is yes: we can thus see that the war may be seen to have done an extraordinary service to music. Being able to prove itself of measurable worth during the war meant that music was significant: musical commentators were therefore in a position to articulate an attitude of confidence and self-belief.

Certainly, during the First World War, music was put to practical uses in ways that had never been considered before. Although the use of music in industry in the Second World War is better known, music also found its way into industrial contexts during the First World War. Scholes would have approved of the way in which large companies such as munitions factories, for example, were places where choirs were formed and concerts put on. Music had a real role to play in positive benefits in the workplace, as the music performed in munitions factories by the Committee for Music in War-Time, which we will examine below, disclosed.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4.4 The Use of Music in Hospitals

Music in medical therapy already had a long tradition, according to wartime commentators, from Orpheus's power to change minds with his music and David's use of the harp to soothe King Saul in biblical times, to Plato's praise for the benefits of music in *The Republic*.<sup>73</sup> Whilst various experiments had used music in a medical context in decades and centuries prior to the First World War, the size, scale and nature of wartime medical problems, along with the specific psychological issues caused by mass warfare (neurasthenia, for example, as shell-shock was first termed), saw a far wider recognition of and interest in the power of music in therapeutic work, specifically in healing and soothing both the physically and the mentally disturbed.

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<sup>71</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: A Great Work,' *Ref*, 15/12/1918, 3.

<sup>72</sup> See also Record of the MIWTC IWM which note that in a particular factory where concerts were given, management was delighted because 'there were no complaints on concert days.' See chapter six below.

<sup>73</sup> James Frederick Rogers, 'Music as Medicine,' *Musical Quarterly* 7, 1918, 365-375.



Along with pioneering work in plastic surgery, the unprecedented nature and scale of injuries caused a reassessment of what might be of use to the medical profession.

The music press often contained specific, empirical evidence for a belief that music was materially beneficial in treating the wounded and ill. This had gradually been recognised by those working in hospitals for wounded soldiers. This comment from the *Monthly Musical Record* in 1916 is typical:

At a Northern war hospital recently a soldier who had lost his powers of speech completely since the Battle of Loos was present at an entertainment in the YMCA. During the singing of a song, 'Any old iron will do,' to the amazement of everyone the dumb man began joining lustily in the chorus. Since then he has become quite normal.<sup>74</sup>

When discussing music used in hospital or healing contexts, it is important to note that there was an evident mingling of styles, genres and tastes in such work. We will see below that the type of music deemed suitable for serving forces was a matter of some debate. What is significant here is that the *Monthly Musical Record* makes no comment whatsoever on the fact that it was a popular song which effected the apparent cure. Music before the war existed in fluid contexts: music-halls often programmed the most well-known concert music, for example, as I discuss in the concluding chapter. We noted above that the working-class approach to literary culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was (as Jonathan Rose has described it) 'a promiscuous mix of high and low.'<sup>75</sup> Musical culture of the nineteenth century also demonstrated this in certain ways, as shown in the work of Alan Bartley.<sup>76</sup> Despite such porous boundaries between genres in certain contexts, it is nonetheless true that within the art-musical world of the traditional concert hall and in musical publications, disparaging attitudes about the taste of so-called 'lower' classes were regularly expressed, as I explore below in chapter five.<sup>77</sup> It was not in the normal way of things for the *Monthly Musical Record* to make regular mention of songs such as 'Any Old Iron,' as it did during wartime. We can thus see that the war allowed for a more generous acceptance of various genres of music amongst some who, before the war, would have been less tolerant.

There was also a widespread mingling of genres at many public events: this was the

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<sup>74</sup> 'The Power of Music,' *MMR*, 1/12/1916, 323.

<sup>75</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, 371.

<sup>76</sup> See Bartley, *Far from the Fashionable Crowd*.

<sup>77</sup> See for example, Ernest Newman, 'The Artist and the People,' *MT*, 1/10/1914, 605; this will be further discussed in section 5.2 below.

case with music for soldiers, as will see, and also frequently the case in charity events. Examples of this include the society fund-raiser in Chelsea for Lena Ashwell's 'Concerts at the Front,' an organisation which will be examined in detail in the next chapter, and for which Elgar wrote the ballet music *The Sanguine Fan*: the programme was described as a 'revue.'<sup>78</sup> Collins has described the mixture of genres at many charitable events as a form of *entente-cordiale*:

What is apparent and significant about the shows for charity was their multi-disciplines, multi-national and multifarious format. They were often [...] designed to appeal to different tastes, 'high' and 'low' brow; the show was *entente-cordiale* in approach, and encompassed performers from different sides of the theatrical divide. There were dances from the ballet and Greek theatre, classic musical solos and musical comedy and sketches.<sup>79</sup>

It is in the context of the wounded in hospital that the use of music as a potential force for healing is most clearly seen.<sup>80</sup> We noted above the *Monthly Musical Record*'s report of a soldier recovering his speech through song, and such reports were found regularly in the music press, most usually from military hospitals.<sup>81</sup>

The opinion of commentators at the time that music was of value to wounded soldiers is borne out by Jeffery Reznick in his detailed study of the various ways in which soldiers in British forces experienced the 'culture of caregiving'. He has noted how music 'formed one cornerstone of the standard wartime convalescent regime.'<sup>82</sup> Authorities, both military and those directing the YMCA, felt that musical activities for the benefit of patients were of 'distinct assistance towards [...] ultimate fitness.'<sup>83</sup>

Lancelot of the *Referee* remarked in 1915 that it was incumbent on organisers of concerts for convalescent soldiers that they should choose their music carefully, avoiding music 'of depressing character,' as well as being sure that performers were

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<sup>78</sup> Lady Elgar was apparently 'horrified [...] at the vulgarity of the remainder of the programme,' which included parodic imitations of notable Chelsea residents. Percy Young, *Elgar O.M., A Study of a Musician* (London: Collins, 1935), 183. *The Tatler*'s 'Eve' noted the event several times in her column leading up to the event, about which there was a great deal of society speculation, although her verdict was ultimately that, 'like most things talked of ad infinitum before they happen, the great Chelsea charity matinee last week didn't perhaps quite come up to anticipation.' 'Letters of Eve,' *Tatler*, 28/3/1917, 387. See also section 5.5 for more on Lena Ashwell's connection with this event.

<sup>79</sup> Collins, *Theatre at War*, 56.

<sup>80</sup> Other intersection between men serving in the forces and musical commentators at home will be the subject of the following chapter.

<sup>81</sup> 'An R.A.M.C doctor was heard to remark that one concert did more good to his patients than several nerve specialists,' 'Musical War Notes,' *MN*, 23/10/1915, 388.

<sup>82</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 83.

<sup>83</sup> L. Graham Brown, 'Military Convalescent Depots in France during the Great War,' *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* 35/3, 1920, 187-202 and 284-299, 285, quoted in Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 85.

of high calibre.<sup>84</sup> The restoration of mental balance was recognised as one of the chief benefits of providing concerts in convalescent homes. One of the many strands of activity of the Music in War-Time Committee, which will be considered below, was providing entertainments in hospitals. These concerts not only entertained and distracted those who could attend, but also created a welcome quiet interval for the most severely wounded cases.<sup>85</sup> A letter from the Commanding Colonel of the Third London General Hospital was sent to one of the concert organisers extolling the quantifiable help that such entertainments provided:

I hope that nothing will stop your concert parties coming here while the war is on. As I live among my patients, I can speak with some authority as to the effect of these concerts on the sick and wounded. The good done to patients by getting away from the atmosphere of the ward is an actual value in the saving of patients. The opinion of my staff and myself is that these entertainments reduce the period of illness by an average of at least five days, and in a hospital of 2,000 beds that means 10,000 days. If the duration of a patient's stay averages 30 days, the concert-room entertainments are equal in value to 300 beds in a large hospital like this. In days gone by no provision was made for this form of treatment, but, as I have said, in my opinion it is actual medical treatment.<sup>86</sup>

The public awareness of such matters was not limited to the opinions of doctors. Occasionally, testimony from patient themselves was included, as for example in a short report in the *Musical News* from 1917 about the experience of Elsie Southgate who had been singing for wounded soldiers. She was told after her short recital (which included many folk songs) that one patient found that her singing had done 'more good than all the medicines and lotions in the doctor's dispensary.'<sup>87</sup>

Towards the end of the war the variety of different efforts received a boost when such work was placed on a more formal footing, with the founding of the 'Vocal Therapy Fund.' This organisation undertook clinically supervised work in hospitals in Birmingham and London. Robin Legge had given an account of the Fund's work

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<sup>84</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: The Therapeutics of Melody,' *Ref*, 15/10/1915, 6.

<sup>85</sup> 'Record of the Music in War-Time Committee, 1914-1920,' *MN*, 4/9/1920, 204: 'Concerts in hospitals were useful to the patients in bed as well as those patients in the recreation room, for they kept the too cheerful element out of the wards for a couple of hours and gave the bad cases a chance to be quiet. It was good for the staff, too, to be able to turn their thoughts to outside things for a time, and mind and body profited by the rest.'

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.* 204. Letter from Sir Bruce Porter to Annette Hullah, which, although sent in March 1917, was not published until 1920 when the report of the Music in War-time Committee was serialised in the *Musical News*. The full record had been compiled for the Imperial War Museum at the request of the committee working on women's contribution to the war effort – see section 6.2.2 below – and is given in the appendices.

<sup>87</sup> 'Miscellaneous Notes,' *MN*, 13/1/1917, 20. The original is given in an imitation of the Scottish language of the speaker, which I have rendered here into conventional spelling. It is not clear from the original article if this is Elsie Southgate the violinist, who had performed in the 1901 Proms season and was also well known on music-hall stages.

in the pages of the *Telegraph* and the paper's other regular critic, Musicus, was able some six weeks later to report that he had attended a concert where the singer, badly wounded and shell-shocked at Gallipoli, had recovered both singing and speaking voice under the ministrations of the fund.<sup>88</sup> In 1919, the Fund made claims in the pages of the *Musical Times* that there was further concrete evidence of the benefits of music on the severely traumatised through war, either through physical or mental injury.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the official verdict on music's benefit to injured or convalescent soldiers – and there seems no reason to doubt the report of those doctors and officers, like Bruce Porter, who were in a good reason to assess the beneficial results of musical intervention – it is by no means the case, of course, that every soldier exposed to such musical activities felt that they were beneficial. Reznick has noted that hospital magazines, written by the patients, revealed that for many, music could become annoying in the extreme in the hospital environment. This might be because pianos were played at the same time as gramophones, or because there was little choice in whether or not one heard the music on offer.<sup>90</sup> Particularly noteworthy is the comment from one writer that a concert he had been obliged to attend was, 'for a thing of this sort not too bad, and I should say quite up to the standard of those inflicted on the men round Walthamstow.'<sup>91</sup> The sheer number of entertainments of this sort that were given inevitably meant that there was a range of ability among the available performers. Even the best performers could not possibly please all the tastes of the audiences all the time. It should therefore be noted that though for a very definite proportion of the military audience, music did indeed have a beneficial therapeutic role, there were many variables which mean that we should not assume that the reality of its benefits to some can always be read as applicable to the many.

#### 4.5 Conclusion: 'The Real Mission of Music'

We have seen in this chapter that, from the earliest days of the war, music had many

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<sup>88</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Vocal Therapy,' *DT*, 16/11/1918, 3 and Musicus, 'World of Music,' *DT*, 28/12/1918, 4.

<sup>89</sup> 'Many have been lifted above their affliction, having learned to understand and enjoy music.' 'Music as Medicine,' *MT*, 1/5/1919, 248.

<sup>90</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 86.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Maurice Gower to his sister, written in a Kent VAD hospital, quoted in Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 87.

claims made for its value as an activity in wartime, and that the experience of war proved this value. It had been expected that music would assist in both distraction and consolation, and there had long been claims for the moral uplift of music; but what had not been foreseen was the very practical recognition of the impact of music on those who had confronted war's most brutal realities.

Lancelot, in December 1917, summed up what has been the focus of this chapter, namely the recognition in wartime that music had a real and practical role to play not only in human life generally but in wartime specifically.

Esteem for music as an art of practical value, as an important element in the preservation of healthy, social life, which has been improved by consequences of the War, has deepened this year. Many of those who have been made to think more seriously than was their habit have found in music a relief from strained nerves and mental unrest. They have realised that outside religion there is no quicker means of restoring disturbed mental balance, of regaining the perception of relative proportion, than in the exercise of music. Music in its many phases has an antidote for every brain trouble. [...] it will take from sadness its depressing influence and will increase our gladness by its expression of our thoughts. There is no friend so sympathetic, so unobtrusive, and so helpful because, unconsciously or consciously, it is an integral part of our life. The importance of the recognition of the real mission of music, to help to make life sane, healthy, and beautiful, can scarcely be overestimated.<sup>92</sup>

The many uses of music – and its intellectual, emotional and physical benefits – enabled musical commentators to claim a leading place for their art during the war. It is thus clear that over the course of the war, the rhetoric surrounding musical activity had travelled a great distance from the war's early days, when leading articles in music journals sought to justify what many thought of as a luxurious pastime.

That music is necessary for the public weal has been proved over and over again. As a relaxation from purely mundane cares, as a health-giving diversion, and as a tonic for drooping spirits, it is one of the blessings of mankind.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Ghosts and Realities,' *Ref*, 30/12/1917, 3.

<sup>93</sup> 'Editorial: Music and Man-Power,' *MN*, 17/1/1917, 101.

## Materiality 8 The First World War and the Gramophone



Two illustrations from The Gramophone Company Catalogue of 1914 and a 1918 advertisement from the *Musical Herald*

The importance of recorded music to troops during the First World War may be gleaned from the recollections of Stewart Montagu Cleeve: 'My major, Dean, who was very well off, brought over a very good gramophone and a great deal of classical records and I learned some of the classical music I know and like best from those days when after all the heat and sweat of battle the Major put on a beautiful classical record. It was really delightful; I loved it. Those were just a few bright spots and the rest of it not so bright but on the other hand one felt one had a tremendous duty.'

That the gramophone should still have held its place in the memory of a veteran some sixty-five years after the Armistice demonstrates the power the gramophone held for many during the war. For Cleeve and others, the

gramophone reminded him of the connection he had with music and beauty back in Britain.<sup>94</sup> Some musicians were vocal in supporting the still relatively new technology as a very useful tool. Scholes used recordings to illustrate troop lectures, rather than live performers, calling the gramophone 'not a toy but a valuable means of reproducing human musical expression.'<sup>95</sup> Arthur Bliss, on military service, asked his father to send records of Wagner and Debussy: 'It is of the greatest possible advantage to have something worthwhile to listen to, worthwhile to read, and worthwhile to eat, probably too in that order,'<sup>96</sup> and Bliss wrote to Edward Dent that he 'suddenly found much solace in the gramophone'.<sup>97</sup> An industry employee commented towards the end of the war that his firm sent 'many thousands of records per month to the boys at the front [...] the orders [are] for fifty per cent of popular music, and the remainder good standard selections and operatic numbers.'<sup>98</sup> Mark Hambourg was happy to learn that soldiers played his recordings 'on their gramophones at the front, in dug-outs, in rest camps, and even in submarines hiding at the bottom of the sea'.<sup>99</sup>

For some, war altered attitudes to the gramophone completely: 'The Gramophone was Anathema to me before this War [...] But all this is changed now, and it is the only means of bringing back to us the days that are gone [...] music is all that we have to help us carry on.'<sup>100</sup> For others, the war made a bad situation worse. Recordings were a 'screeching abortion',<sup>101</sup> or had dreadful sound quality: 'Everything that goes into its metallic maw suffers a sea-change into something strange, but not rich [...] When the gramophone comes in at the door, Orpheus flies out at the window'.<sup>102</sup> One scholar, however, has argued convincingly that for troops serving in the trenches, the gramophone not only kept soldiers in touch with home, but created 'a kind of aural safety by re-sounding order and harmony over and against a world of deadly noise'.<sup>103</sup> Technology would ultimately change the whole face of music, but as Ehrlich points out, until 1929 gramophone (and radio and cinema) had a benign influence, 'creating new, but not yet destroying old, forms of employment'.<sup>104</sup> During the war, the gramophone, widely used for all kinds of music, in educational as well as recreational circumstances, had a very valuable place.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Cleeve recalled a home leave following injury when he had a chance to spend time with his family, who loved 'music and art and all things like that.' His leave was 'a grand chance to have a bit of music with my mother again.' IWM, Interview Catalogue No 7310. The material relating to music may be found in Reel 6..

<sup>95</sup> Robin Legge, 'In France with a Gramophone,' *Music Student*, 1/9/1917, 13.

<sup>96</sup> Bliss, writing to his father, *As I Remember*, 39.

<sup>97</sup> Bliss writing to Dent in January 1916, quoted in Arrandale, 'Artists' rifles,' 7.

<sup>98</sup> Louis Sterling, 'Conditions in the Talking Machine Industry in England,' *Talking Machine World*, April 1918, 55, quoted in J. Rüger, 'Entertainments,' in J. Winter and J. Robert ed., *Capital Cities at War Volume 2*, 132.

<sup>99</sup> Hambourg, *From Piano to Forte*, 252.

<sup>100</sup> Capt. J. Lawrence Fry to Elgar, 5/10/1917, quoted in Bird, 'Chronology', 434.

<sup>101</sup> Cecil Barber, 'Organist-in-Ordinary,' *MT*, 1/1/1918, 26.

<sup>102</sup> Harvey Grace, 'Orpheus chez nous,' *MT*, 1/2/1916, 84.

<sup>103</sup> John M Gómez, *Consuming Sounds: Recorded Music, Literature, and Modernity 1914-1955*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2011, 64.

<sup>104</sup> Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 186.

<sup>105</sup> IWM, Interview Catalogue No 7310, Reel 6.

## Chapter Five: Music and the Military

It is no exaggeration to say that the First World War brought people in Britain into contact with the armed forces in a way that had never before been the case. This is true in two ways. Firstly, there is the obvious fact of the unprecedented creation of a new army, necessitated by the small size of the standing army. The new army was initially made up of volunteers and was subsequently increased by a conscripted army, from 1916 onwards. Millions of men thus served in the forces who had never expected to do so. But in addition, ordinary citizens, not members of the forces themselves, had a far closer connection with soldiers and sailors than hitherto, for a variety of reasons. This could be in the course of their employment (and musicians fall into this category, as well as nurses and many other service industries); it might be that people had relatives who were serving in the forces; or it could simply be that there was a vast and obvious presence of uniforms in public spaces.

Before 1914, the army had been a comparatively small, largely unfamiliar organisation: unless one had direct personal contact with them, one's knowledge and experience of the professional military man was necessarily limited.<sup>1</sup> The war changed all this and the needs, practices, habits and interests of the serving soldier were commonly discussed in the national press. The need for (and use of) music by the serving man was one significant strand of such discussions. This chapter will investigate the connection of the military with music as present in the public discourse at home in Britain in several ways: I will pay particular attention to the direct and detailed contact between serving men and working musicians, between the reality of life in military bases and at the front as presented in British musical publications, and the thoughts and assistance of musicians and musical commentators at home. Whilst this chapter concentrates on the new ways in which music and serving men intersected during the war, it should of course not be imagined that military personnel were bereft of music in pre-war days. Although what to do with military bands posed something of a conundrum for the authorities on the outbreak of war, a vibrant tradition of military music existed, with personnel involved in both

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<sup>1</sup> The British Expeditionary Force, that part of the army kept ready to intervene internationally and which was dispatched to France in 1914, totalled 90,000 by August 1914: numbers sent to France by the Armistice (leaving aside the many other theatres of war) numbered approximately four million. See Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914–1918* (London: Harper, 2005), xxiv.



listening to and performing music. Despite initial hesitation, the army gradually reintroduced bands during the course of the war and they played an important role in many arenas.<sup>2</sup>

Our retrospective ideas of the experience of the soldier during this period often reduce the war experience to trench warfare on the Western Front. However, as we saw in chapter one, the realities were far more complex and nuanced than standard images of the war would allow. In the case of serving soldiers, far from spending the entire war in the trenches, they were rotated between front-line trenches, support trenches, and rest camps or other support situations, and those stationed at home also had far different and no less valid experiences. It is in these spaces that are often unseen that music and the serving soldier most often intersected.<sup>3</sup> To grasp the importance of the connection between them, we need to ensure that we have a broad understanding of the complexities of the soldier's life.

For many British people, this potted version – and their sole knowledge of the military experience in the First World War – is mediated through a schooldays study of war poetry, although school curricula are gradually evolving, especially in light of the war's centenary. Studying the war through the poets has not only given an incomplete impression of the war, but the poets themselves have often been misread. Nicholas Murray's research into the war poets provides an outstanding and stimulating alternative suggestion as to the rationale behind the majority of soldier-poets' works. He finds, not a pacifism that is implied in much teaching of poetry of the First World War, rather an anti-heroic stand; he also identifies that, in the vast majority of cases, soldiers nonetheless felt that the war was a necessary war.<sup>4</sup> For most of these soldiers, taking part in the war continued to be felt as their duty. As Murray explains it, the British poets who wrote during the First World War:

were not anti-war but 'anti-heroic'. They did not think, for the most part, that modern trench warfare was a chivalric pursuit, full of high nobility and exalted emotion, and martial heroism like something out of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* [...] They

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<sup>2</sup> Military music in Britain is amply covered in a recent monograph by Trevor Herbert and Helen Barlow, although it appeared too late for inclusion in this study: *Music and the British Military in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Lena Ashwell's organisation, Concerts at the Front, which is examined below in section 5.5, sent firingline concert parties, and Harry Lauder describes giving a concert to an artillery battery, held in a recently made large shell crater, accompanied by the sound of the guns. See Harry Lauder, *A Minstrel in France* (London, Melrose: 1918), 206-7.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Murray, *The Red Sweet Wine of Youth: British Poets of the First World War* (London: Little Brown, 2010).

satirised the pomposity of those who could not see the reality of the trenches and they did indeed believe that it was a 'lie' to call the carnage of the Western Front 'sweet and fitting'.<sup>5</sup> But they also saw no alternative and so they went to war, and, when they were wounded, then healed, went back again to the war to join their comrades.<sup>6</sup>

We miss a great deal of the rich variety of experience that was true of soldiers' lives during the war if our knowledge is gleaned solely from selected poets of the war, giving the vision described by Murray:

Entrenched in the anthologies of First World War poetry, in a landscape of trench, duck-board and engulfing mud, the night sky lit up with unearthly flares and loud with exploding shells, whistling bullets and terrifying whizz-bangs, promiscuous trench-rats scuttling across the waste expanse of No Man's Land [...] somewhere the iconic nodding poppy.<sup>7</sup>

Because of the perceived need to provide soldiers (at home, either stationed, convalescing or on leave, as well as those posted overseas) with various forms of entertainment, musicians were peculiarly well placed for connecting with these lives either at home or overseas.<sup>8</sup> Many musicians themselves were serving in the forces, and by means of various musical in-house journals like the *Magazine of the Royal College of Music*, and the press, their experiences were widely broadcast. This study, in its focus on the public discourse surrounding art music during the years of the war, cannot follow soldier-musicians, either executants or composers, too closely into their lives in the forces, although such a study would no doubt be rewarding. What it can do is to investigate those ways in which the intersection of the two spheres of military and musical was elucidated by the musical and national press.

Music was one avenue in which the lives of those who remained at home in various non-combatant roles crossed paths with the lives of men serving in the forces. The uses of music discussed in the previous chapter include consolation, distraction, wholesome occupation, and physical and mental therapy. These uses apply equally

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<sup>5</sup> 'Sweet and fitting' is one translation of 'Dulce et decorum est,' lines from Horace, used in the poem by Wilfred Owen of the same title: 'dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' (It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country) is described as 'The Old Lie.'

<sup>6</sup> Murray, *Red Sweet Wine*, 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> For example, pupils of several London musical teaching establishments were involved in entertaining soldiers: the Royal Academy of Music held a tea with musical entertainment for wounded overseas soldiers (3/12/1917), attended by diplomatic officials of the countries represented: and pupils of the Guildhall School of Music appeared in the press in photographs captioned, 'Wounded "Tommies" have a violin lesson. The Misses Crichlowe from the GSM entertaining wounded soldiers at Newbury Park Hospital yesterday,' *Daily Mail*, 8/6/1915; 'Girl Musicians Teach Tommy to Sing,' *Sunday Herald*, 13/6/1915: non-paginated cuttings from Press Cuttings of the GSM, LMA, CLA/056/AD/04/9.

well to the lives of soldiers, and in many senses the conclusions of the previous chapter apply equally to the lives of soldiers as they do to any civilian (as we saw, for example, in the use of music for healing therapy in hospitals).

It is important in the context of discussing the discourse surrounding music and the military to be clear about the notion of the 'home front.' This concept is an important basis for the grounding of this thesis and its propositions. For Winter and Robert, the concept of the 'home front' is absolutely crucial for understanding the outcome of the war:

No one would argue for a moment that the war was won or lost solely on the home front. We hold instead that a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of Allied victory was the maintenance of the set of capabilities and functionings of their civilian population, and the popular recognition that this in fact had been the case. Equally, a necessary, though far from sufficient, explanation of German defeat was the failure of the German authorities to distribute goods and services effectively as between civilian and military claimants, and popular recognition of this failure.<sup>9</sup>

Because the gulf between the experiences of those who remained at home and those who fought is so vast, it is often perceived as unbridgeable; this in turn separates home and fighting fronts as two distinct and unrelated entities. However, the whole notion of the home front is interwoven with the entire prosecution of the war, and recent historical scholarship has tended to reunite the home and the fighting fronts. Reznick, for example, has seen in the YMCA huts a means of linking the home and fighting fronts: 'The hut therefore aimed to 'bring "Blighty" to the soldier,' structuring a bridge between the familiar – indeed, familial – and the unfamiliar and chaotic experiences of the war.'<sup>10</sup> With emphasis previously placed on the impossibility of those at home having any conception of the reality of the trenches, there has been in the past an assumption of a fundamental disconnection between the two. In fact, there was a powerful connection between the two, as Gregory explains:

The alienation of soldiers from civilians is such a literary stereotype of the war that the obvious point has been forgotten; the two were inevitably linked in countless ways. The constant flow of letters to and from the armies and leave, increasingly regularised, although never frequent enough from the soldiers' point of view, maintained the links. [...] Indeed, it is difficult to find a contemporary civilian account that doesn't demonstrate a fairly high degree of knowledge about conditions at the front. No one was entirely convinced by the more romanticised and sanitised accounts that appeared in the media, and the media itself was far more honest about front-line conditions than legend

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<sup>9</sup> Jay Winter, 'Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919: Capital Cities at War,' in Winter and Roberts ed., *Capital Cities*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 18.

suggests.<sup>11</sup>

A concept perhaps more familiar from the Second World War than the First, the term 'home front' in fact originated in the First World War. As Susan Grayzel has said, the way it connects the domestic idea of home with a military term highlights the involvement of 'civilians in a way not found in any previous modern European war'.<sup>12</sup> More than this, however, the attitudes and behaviours of the whole nation were involved in conflict in ways unprecedented in earlier wars. The whole country was part of the war effort, and the ways in which civilians and soldiers interacted in musical ways, no less than others, is a part of this whole.

There is less difference and separation, then, between home front and other fronts (Western or Eastern, theatres of war in Africa or Japan) than is often supposed. However, in the case of serving military, the uses of music were peculiarly separate and in some cases unique, because of the unique circumstances in which soldiers served. These differences are as fruitful for investigation as the continuities and contiguous elements between the lives of soldiers and their families, or the general public, and the public discourse surrounding these issues is the subject of this chapter.

The chapter is divided into three principal sections. Firstly, I will investigate the debate in the first year of the war about the provision of music at recruiting stations and for soldiers on the march, for which a national campaign was formed. Secondly, I will examine the long-running debate about 'Tommy's taste,' that is, the taste of the ordinary soldier, a topic under seemingly constant discussion from the first days of the war to its end and beyond. The provision of music for this vast heterogeneous agglomeration of people was the stimulus for a wide-ranging debate about musical taste in general, and raised in particular issues of class, background and education, all of which were seen to relate to the type of music that was to be provided for soldiers. It will be seen that notions of cultural capital and particularly, dominant and dominated taste in the Bourdieusian sense, are relevant here. Debate on this topic covered both the style and the quality of the music, and although no definitive

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<sup>11</sup> Gregory, *Last Great War*, 133

<sup>12</sup> Grayzel, *Women's Identities at War*, 11. Grayzel makes the crucially important point that the home and the military front had 'porous' boundaries and were not sealed off the one from the other. This is a key point when we come to discuss music and morale, as the military sphere very often intrudes into such discussions; although this study concentrates on the home front, I will demonstrate that the connections between the two were an essential part of the whole dynamic.

conclusions were reached, even within the pages of one journal, the topic was perennially fresh and impinges on a more general understanding of musical taste and style and its place in the public discourse. This is a vital avenue for investigation and relates to the wider currents of music and music's future, and the war thus provides a microcosm of a developing society that found such issues publicly interesting.

The third section of this chapter investigates the practical provision of music for serving soldiers, both on British soil and overseas. Such provision was actively discussed in the very early days of the war, and as the war continued, those working with soldiers musically wrote widely about their experiences. This section of the chapter investigates both the various types of concert and entertainment that were put on for soldiers (in hospitals, camps and elsewhere) as well as the inclusion of a uniformed audience in more general concerts. It also examines the types of concert party that were sent out overseas. In this respect, the work of Lena Ashwell will serve as exemplar: her 'Concerts at the Front' had a high profile in the British press and will provide a good representative of not only the type of work that was done but the debate it engendered. The work of artists who went to perform overseas is one way in which musicians at home were brought into direct contact with the realities of the war, many of which were written about in perhaps surprising detail in some musical publications.<sup>13</sup>

The intermingling of the civilian and the military happened during the First World War to a degree that would seem incredible to us today. For example, Kennerly Rumford (singer and husband of Clara Butt) took it upon himself to take out his own motor vehicle and assist the army, at first on his own initiative although he later received an army rank and official backing. Such private efforts, many of which took the form of equipping, supplying and staffing field ambulances were widespread.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Within the central focus of this work on public discourse around art music, the work of Lena Ashwell will figure largely as it was widely discussed at home. This is not to say that such schemes were the only types of musical entertainment provided. Within the army itself, as the war wore on, the military authorities sanctioned the formation of divisional and other concert parties, and these did essential work within the army in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. A brief account of their work is given in J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) and will be referred to in the section on music for the troops below: the subject would merit further in-depth study. Larry Collins's work also contains much of interest relating to theatrical and musical provision for troops (see Collins, *Theatre at War*).

<sup>14</sup> Others, not in a position to finance such efforts, nonetheless experienced a keen desire to be involved in some way: novelist May Sinclair's 1915 memoir of the few weeks she spent with a field ambulance unit in Belgium (facing advancing Germans) depicts not only the horror but the aliveness that the war brought to many. Sinclair went officially as a writer attached to the unit but wanted to go out into the field. She, like many women at the time, longed for freedom and adventure, and in

The musical parties given by such people as Ashwell operated within the remit of the army in a way which would not be easy to achieve now, but at the time the Army accepted the services offered by many organisations such as the YMCA, knowing that charitable endeavours provided invaluable assistance at a time of emergency. A study investigating these partnerships would also be very valuable, although such issues can only be briefly alluded to in these pages.

## 5.1 Music as an Aid to Recruiting

I consider music the greatest inspiration to patriotism. To shorten the war we want millions of soldiers; to get the soldiers we want music; to have the music we want money. And Mr Rudyard Kipling in his eloquent speech expressed his opinion that a band 'can swing a battalion back to quarters happy and composed in its mind, no matter how wet or tired its body may be'.<sup>15</sup>

The words of London's Lord Mayor, above, reveal that recruiting in the early days and months of the war was a serious business: for all the tales of young men queuing at recruiting offices to sign up, there are also tales of time, money and ingenuity dedicated to persuading young men to part with their liberty and take the King's shilling. A notice in the *Daily Telegraph* will illustrate an orchestrated event at the London Opera House designed to convince the uncertain:

'England Expects' [is] designed to make a tremendous appeal to possible recruits. [It] deals with the regeneration of a 'slacker' who, shown the error of his ways, is persuaded to enlist, the last glimpse of him being in the trenches, manfully serving his country [...] There will also be patriotic recitations by well known actors [...] Recruiting officers will be in attendance all day, so that young men, moved by the performance to enlist, may do so on the spot.<sup>16</sup>

We can see from this example that the creative use of entertainment (in this case, theatre) for the purposes of swelling the ranks of Kitchener's 'New Army' was not uncommon. It is unsurprising, therefore, that music was thought of as a potential aid to the same end. From late 1914 onwards, Robin Legge had been publicly lamenting the lack of music, having observed recruits pass by. His comments paint a vivid picture of the difference between the absence of musical support, and the encouragement derived from the presence of musicians:

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particular the social freedom between the sexes that for women of her generation had been far from the usual experience.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Johnston, 'Recruiting Bands,' *Times*, 30/1/1915, 9.

<sup>16</sup> 'London Opera House,' *DT*, 10/9/1914, 5.

Day after day there pass my house splendid bodies of Kitchener's New Army [...] This has gone on for quite two months or more now, yet I have never seen any sign of military musical help to the march [...] Are we so very hard up for musicians that Kitchener's New Army have to make their own music by singing or whistling where at least they might be helped by the addition of a few bandsmen? [...] One of the marchers told me the other day that he never felt fitter in his life than during his first long route march, but that when he returned to 'barracks' and he was left to march home alone, about half a mile, he felt quite 'beat,' because he had not the rhythmic support of his companions or the music. [...] No one, of course, least of all the recruits, wants a series of quasi-circus performances, as it were, to attract our countrymen to arms; but there is a vast difference between what I call circus performances and a legitimate use of brass or military bands while recruiting is going on, and long after when the recruiting is complete, and the recruits and the whole armies ask for musical relaxation.<sup>17</sup>

Legge's point that the use of music should not be akin to 'quasi-circus performances' highlights the fact that, for most musicians, the thought of their craft being used to assist in recruitment was not designed to use manipulation or trickery (although the example of the London Opera House play, where recruiting officers were hoping to take advantage of emotions roused by the war, may be seen in this light). Serious commentators on music saw the provision of marching bands as an encouragement for those who were determined to sign up, to help them on their way. A week later, Legge wrote, 'Hooray! I have heard a band at last as a large contingent of Kitchener's New Army passed my house on a route march. The contrast of this march with many a score of similar but silent marches was most vivid.'<sup>18</sup>

At the outbreak of war, the beneficial effect of a band on the army had been lost sight of by the military authorities. The official decision to reallocate the personnel from army bands to other forms of military service, very quickly taken after war was declared, was held up by many as woefully short-sighted.

Strangely enough, music is left out of the all-foreseeing arrangements of Lord Kitchener. Bandsmen are disbanded in a literal sense [...] But music will 'out'. We have all heard the blithe whistling of our recruits as they march every day stepping as if they were treading on air [...] If some disinterested amateurs could get together a good brass band and give evening concerts on every night of the week, the monotony which seems to be the only cloud in the training horizon, would disappear immediately. And if amateur talent is not to be obtained, I am certain that the War Office could spend money in no wiser fashion than by providing music for the new recruits. Indeed, I believe one or two of the sea-coast bands which have suffered by the war might make a good living, if the military authorities would sanction the necessary collection as an addition to the music.'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Robin Legge, 'Where are the Bands?' *DT*, 7/11/1914, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music and the War: My Postbag,' *DT*, 14/11/1914, 13. Although the types of music played by military bands was of a mixed nature and could not be described purely as 'art music,' nonetheless it was so often commented on by the musical critics of the daily press as well as the music journals, that an interest in army music may be seen as evidence of a general understanding that music of all forms was valid in wartime.

<sup>19</sup> 'War Songs Past and Present,' *MH*, 1/11/1914, 386.

This is another example of a private initiative being suggested to supply a want which, in more recent times, would (and could) be done only officially. Music was often in this quasi-official position.

Although the army had been short-sighted in reallocating the men who were in army bands, the authorities' initial hasty reaction to the declaration of war was based on necessity: there was a need to ensure sufficient manpower resources were available for the unprecedented war situation. Understandable though the concern over levels of recruitment was, it soon proved to be an unwise policy indeed, and the public clamour for a formal band movement grew. A campaign was begun in early 1915 to this end, with the backing of Rudyard Kipling and others. Its aim was to solicit funds from the public to establish national bands for the new army.<sup>20</sup>

There were two apparent elements to the campaign. Some recognised that the provision of music would assist the training of new recruits in that it would stave off boredom: the mention above of monotony as 'the only cloud on the training horizon' may seem odd to we who are aware that the young recruits destined for the trenches had far more to be concerned about than mere boredom. However, it could take many months before training was complete and the new army was put into action, and anecdotal evidence suggests that boredom was one of the primary experiences of the war.<sup>21</sup> The other emphasis of the campaign for recruiting bands was that element which Legge mentioned above: the encouragement and support of recently volunteered men. The official directive, quoted in the *Music Student* shows this:

The War Office have consented to a scheme, suggested by Miss Gladys Storey, for using music as a stimulus to recruiting. 'Conductor and bandmasters of brass or silver bands who are willing to assist are invited to communicate with the War Office with a view to turning out for an hour or two in the course of a week to head route marches of battalions or companies of newly enlisted soldiers through Central London. Bandmasters should communicate with the Chief Recruiting Officer at Scotland Yard.'<sup>22</sup>

In February 1915, a leading article in the *Monthly Musical Record* lamented the fact

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<sup>20</sup> Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, 426.

<sup>21</sup> Percy Scholes comments on 'The Boredom of War,' noting that 'Physical danger is but one part of the trial of war. Quite as bad, to many a man, is the boredom of the Base.' Percy Scholes, 'How Music Helped to Win the War,' *MStud*, 1/12/1918, 128. Historians have agreed on the significance of boredom: see A. Horrall, *Popular Culture in London c. 1890-1918: The Transformation of Entertainment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 193, Todman, *Great War*, xi, and Bourne, *Britain and the Great War*, 214.

<sup>22</sup> 'Music and the War: A Collection of Facts and Thoughts,' *MStud*, 1/12/1914, 74.



that music's ability to sustain troops mentally had not yet received recognition from the authorities, although it welcomed signs that music was receiving more attention within military circles:

We note with pleasure the increasing use of music in conjunction with the new armies at home. This continued ignoring of this valuable military asset would be unwise on the part of the authorities, who apparently still have much to learn of the real value of music in its sustaining, reviving, and inspiring powers over the spirits of the troops [...] We note with pleasure the formation of bands for the Military Training Corps in the Metropolis and elsewhere. Their permanent value for evening relaxation in concentration camps has yet to be recognised. It is not for terrifying purposes, as with the Scotch bagpipes, that both the Germans and the Russians take their bands with them to battle, but for the wonderful reviving effects which music exercises over the spirits of man.<sup>23</sup>

The writer lamented the lack of early recognition of the uplifting and reviving powers of music on the part of the authorities, but as the war proceeded, official sanction of and support for all manner of musical enterprise was increased. Partnerships with private organisations (including such organisations as the YMCA) and small groups of individuals were established for this purpose.

By March 1916, regular recruiting bands were accompanying soldiers to their points of departure. London's Lord Mayor, Sir Charles Wakefield, recognised that music provided so much more to the soldier than smoothing over the sorrows of departure:

Sir – The recruiting bands have done such excellent work in the past that they need no comment from me. Their chief occupation now is playing the recruits on their march to various depots and to railway stations. Without these bands, men would go off in sadness and in silence. I very much regret to say we have been forced to withdraw them from playing to the wounded in the hospitals for lack of funds. Our brave warriors, who listened eagerly for the life-giving strains of our military bands, are now unfortunately without them. To the letters from hospitals appealing for our bands we are obliged regretfully to say 'No.' Will the public come to our help by sending subscriptions to me?<sup>24</sup>

This call on the public purse to provide music for the troops is part of the far wider way in which public funding in the form of charitable giving or government issued war bonds provided an absolutely essential part of the war machine, a matter which will be examined in detail later.

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<sup>23</sup> 'Music and Recruiting,' *MMR*, 1/2/1915, 34.

<sup>24</sup> Sir Charles Wakefield, 'Recruiting Bands,' *MMR*, 1/3/1916, 84.

## 5.2 Tommy's Taste: Public Debate on the Quality and Type of Musical Provision for Soldiers

Within three months of the outbreak of war, the provision of entertainment for the troops had become a national issue: a 'new army' of untrained, inexperienced and for the most part young men was being trained and Kitchener realised early on that such numbers of people would need entertainment. The *Daily Telegraph* reported in late October 1914 that various people had made arrangements to respond to 'Lord Kitchener's appeal for the provision of recreation for this New Army,' including the establishment of a 'Camp Concerts Fund,' which would fulfil a dual function of providing paid employment to musicians and entertaining the soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

The soldiers' need for music was widely recognised and discussed as the conflict progressed:

Every account one reads of the concerts and musical entertainments given not only to the wounded in our hospitals, but to the men of the armies now in training, goes to show that the soldiers are absolutely craving for music. In the time of peace they would not, perhaps, have claimed to be specially musical, but the stress of conflict has led them to realise their need. They like to be sung and played to, and they like to sing and play for themselves; in listening to music they forget the terrible experiences through which they have passed, or the hard labour which is necessary to fit them to take their place in the field [...] let us remember that materialism is not everything, that man is as much soul as body, and that all the needs of his nature have to be cared for. It is not enough to surround him with as many creature comforts as are possible in the circumstances; he stands in need of those humanising influences which make him a man instead of an animal. The men who to-day are defending the British Empire [...] crave for music in any form in which they can get it, and it is the part of us at home to see that they do not ask in vain. Our first duty is to win this war, and one of the means to that end is to make our men as fit as possible. If music does that, as there can be no doubt it does, then it is plain that supplying them with it is as much a national as a charitable act.<sup>26</sup>

This article highlights an essential strand of wartime discourse surrounding music and soldiers, one which prompted a lively debate: that is, that serving soldiers 'crave for music in any form which they can get it, and it is the part of us at home to see that they do not ask in vain.' There are two crucial elements to this comment: firstly, the sense of incumbency upon observers in the relative safety, peace and comfort at home – that there was a duty to provide serving forces with music; secondly, the fact that this music which was craved was for music 'in any form.' For some, this was interpreted as a chance to elevate the taste of soldiers; others pointed out that soldiers had good taste already and should not be given second-rate or paltry or inferior

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<sup>25</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music and the War: Musical Benefits,' *DT*, 31/10/1914, 4.

<sup>26</sup> 'The Soldier's Need for Music,' *MN*, 20/11/1915, 475.

music; and a third argument held that whatever the soldier wanted, the soldier should get.

This last philosophy was one evidently held by piano manufacturers Broadwood, who began the Broadwood Camp Concerts. Their chosen mode of operation was not to insist on overtly serious or highbrow music, but to provide an evening's entertainment quite different to the chamber music concerts that the company had formerly promoted at the Aeolian Hall. As the *Daily Telegraph* noted, rather than those concerts of days past, the camp concerts were 'less concerts than first-rate variety entertainments,' consisting as they did of 'a couple of good singers, an entertainer, a ventriloquist, a banjoist, a pianist who can play ragtime, or a marionette show.'<sup>27</sup>

As to the 'taste' of the ordinary soldier, among those who held that the provision of wartime music offered a chance to elevate or develop the musical taste of the ordinary working man, in this case the soldier, there was little consensus on what constituted 'good' music, although most agreed that it was important to ensure that this was what was provided. This debate about the kind of music suitable for soldiers ran almost continuously throughout the war. This is exemplified in an account given in a special issue of the *Music Student* devoted entirely to soldiers and music, in September 1917. Although lengthy, it is valuable as an example of this recurrent theme:

### Tommy's Taste in Music

Miss Lena Ashwell, whom the war has turned into the world's greatest impresario, showed what she thought of Tommy's taste by a daring statement she made in a northern town of England where she was engaged in raising money for fresh activities as concert organiser in chief for the troops. 'We send only the best music [...] Bach, Beethoven and Debussy – and the soldiers love them.'

There was, perhaps, a little unconscious exaggeration in the first part of that statement [...] Miss Ashwell and her Committee 'send' [...] the composers named, but [...] those by whom they send them sometimes deliver in their place certain inferior composers. And indeed there is something to be said for the provision of what may be called 'amusement-music,' as well as for that of the music of deeper human expression. Both have their place – the one, the equivalent of the lighter journalism, and the other that of real literature. The second part of Miss Ashwell's statement is, however, true to the letter. The men do love the best music if it be really well performed. An incident will illustrate their feeling [...]

As the [cello] piece ended, a single voice cried, 'Give us some ragtime, mister!' but five hundred voices yelled, 'No, give us the good stuff!' 'And that, said the performer when

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<sup>27</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Excellent Entertainments,' *DT*, 12/12/1914, 5.

the concert was over, 'was the finest compliment I ever received.'

It is the sort of compliment in which others, too, have glorified. I have seen audiences of soldiers bring down the house after the playing of Olly Oaksey, deservedly announced as 'The World's Greatest Banjoist,' and why shouldn't they? for he is a very virtuoso on his instrument, and his rhythmic sense is a joy, if the melodies he plays are not all such as will last the world out. But I have also seen the very same men lose their heads over the playing of a Haydn Trio by three fine artists from Paris. I have seen them encore an opera song of Mozart, though sung in a language of which they probably knew never a word, and as for the Peer Gynt music of Grieg, I have known the men of a Horse Transport camp (farm labourers and the like, generally to be reckoned the class the least susceptible to artistic influences) moved by it to the emotion that shews itself in perfect stillness – more eloquent than any applause.

Here, by the way, is a phenomenon that is misunderstood by some concert parties who come to France. It is not always the noisiest reception that betokens the keenest appreciation. At Falaise-sur-Mer they used to hold song competitions among the men themselves, with a view to discovering talent for camp concerts. The adjudication was done by vote of the whole audience, and it was found that while the comic songs got the wild applause, the good music won the prizes.<sup>28</sup>

This extract from an article by Percy Scholes exemplifies well certain attitudes to the question of the taste of the soldier. Scholes is, like Legge in the *Daily Telegraph*, a tolerant commentator, who understood that there was a place for all kinds of music. He also recognised that an audience may respond to many different genres in different ways. His appreciation of the talents of 'The World's Greatest Banjoist' shows that he makes an attempt at stepping outside his own experience and taste to recognise virtuosity when it is present, even when he considers such music to have merely ephemeral appeal. The revelation of class prejudices, or generalisations widely accepted – as in his assumption that the farm labourer was 'the least susceptible to artistic influences' – is a theme which recurs throughout any cultural commentary during this war.

There is ample evidence (for example, Rose's study *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, as well as the work of Alan Bartley) to refute the accuracy of such generalisations based on class and education. Such views, however, were the widely accepted norm among the sort of commentators under scrutiny here, the mainstream of published musical journalism. The entrenched nature of such views makes it highly significant that some commentators challenged them during the war. This is an important marker of the differing nature of the times. The war was an upheaval which caused the normal course of life to be derailed, and music was one of the

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<sup>28</sup> Percy Scholes, 'Tommy's Tunes: The Army in France as a Branch of the Royal Academy of Music,' *MStud*, 1/9/1917, 7-9.

arenas where a temporary dissolution of boundaries was sometimes evident (a matter I return to in the concluding chapter.)

The extraordinary nature of the wartime army meant an almost unprecedented mingling of classes and backgrounds. It is therefore interesting to examine how Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital would apply to an environment in which certain social boundaries were disturbed. At the beginning of the war, the officer class would only have been formed of the upper and upper-middle classes but as the war progressed, the army became significantly more of a meritocracy and able and competent men of all social classes were promoted to fill vacancies (casualties occurring amongst officer classes more rapidly than others, especially in the war's early days).<sup>29</sup> Amongst the ranks too, certain men who by social class would have qualified for an officer's commission chose instead to serve with the other ranks. In all areas of the army then, at some stage of the war, most men would have had the experience of being billeted or working alongside men of differing classes. Although membership of the same class would not have course have meant similarly or parity of taste, the essence of cultural capital is a familiarity with cultural or educational artefacts and concepts and an ease of expression in using such objects, conversationally, socially or otherwise. The mix of elements in the army would have meant that any musical provision for them would have an unusual audience from their pre-war or civilian experiences.

For concert-givers involved with the military, decisions were always being taken as to the content of programmes, on the home front and overseas. In the discussion of each of these cases below, it will be seen that a variety of approaches was taken, some struggling with the ambivalence that Bourdieu noted, and others setting aside questions of influence, aiming instead to concentrate on achieving a balance between their own interests and satisfying an audience.

One element common to many deliberations about music for troops was the extent to which new or unfamiliar music could be introduced to audiences. This is evident in comment made by some involved with the Committee for Music in War-Time. This

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<sup>29</sup> Trevor Wilson notes that there is 'no reason to doubt that the upper classes paid a disproportionately high price,' because of volunteering early on in high numbers, being in better nutritional and physical health and therefore more readily passing medical boards, amongst other reasons; he supplies casualty figures which show that junior officers were the hardest hit rank. Wilson, *Myriad Faces*, 758-9.

was a scheme designed to give employment to musicians, which I examine in chapter six. A large part of its activity was devoted to hospital entertainments. Its mixed programmes, which included a wide variety of types of entertainment, were popular provided that the quality and sincerity of the artist was evident.<sup>30</sup> However, there was also a realisation that whilst audiences naturally clung to the familiar, with care and persistence, they could be introduced to a far wider variety of music, including the chance to elevate taste:

So rooted was the idea that new music was unpopular with the soldiers, the same songs turned up every time. A good deal of persuasion with more than a flavouring of firmness was necessary to mark out fresh lines, but with the help of the best artists who did realise what an opportunity they had of enlarging the country's musical horizon, entertainments were soon brought up to a higher level.<sup>31</sup>

The strength of critical opinion amongst a soldier audience was also evident in an *Observer* article from 1915 which, in soliciting volunteers to provide entertainment in military hospitals for Boxing Day, stressed:

It must be remembered that soldiers are very critical. They greatly appreciate a good programme, but it must be quite understood that it must be first-rate, in good taste and thoroughly attractive and amusing.<sup>32</sup>

The attention paid in the musical press to music for serving troops demonstrates the importance of music as a cultural link between servicemen and civilians, as well as re-emphasising music's role as generator of both morale and relaxation. Musicians, among other entertainers, were increasingly appreciated by the armed forces as a beneficial influence. As the war wore on, most rest camps overseas had a music co-ordinator provided by the YMCA (work which Gustav Holst went out to do in Salonika in 1918). The large scale of such work as well as its importance was recognised by the special edition (September 1917) of the *Music Student* dedicated to the subject. The importance of this special issue is not that the topic was a new or original one; throughout the war the subject of what and how to provide music for the troops was a recurrent theme in all music journals. Instead, the real significance of this issue is that those who contributed to it in writing were not merely critics or commentators: they were practitioners, directly or indirectly involved with the provision of music for troops on a day-to-day basis, for at least some part of the war. The articles were written entirely by people involved first-hand in music for soldiers

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<sup>30</sup> 'Record of the Music in War-Time Committee, 1914-1920,' *MN*, 4/9/1920, 204.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> 'Entertaining the Wounded,' *Observer*, 28/11/1915, 20.

in active service situations. The *Music Student* was widely read in Britain and its information would have been widely disseminated. This is evidence that not only was the day-to-day life of the soldier of interest to people at home, but so were the ways in which musicians engaged with those lives. Perhaps most important was the way in which music itself was seen to be playing a vital role in contributing to the wellbeing and welfare of the troops.

The level of detail and interest in the subject of music for the troops may be seen by looking at the titles of the individual articles published in this issue of the *Music Student*:

Tommy's Tunes: The Army in France as a Branch of the Royal Academy of Music (Percy Scholes)  
Soldiers' Concerts: A Plea for Good Music (John Baillie)  
A Hut at the Front and its Music (Arthur Macpherson, Cadet Garrison Officer)  
In France with a Gramophone (Scholes)  
A Soldier's Glee Club ('By a YMCA Hut Leader in France')  
A Soldier's Musical Competition: A report – and its lesson (anonymous)  
Concerts for Soldiers at Home (Text and photographs)  
How to Organise a War Fund Concert Among your Pupils (E.M.G. Reed)  
The Naval and Military Music Union (Major A Corbett-Smith)  
Musicians One Meets: Some Pleasant Encounters Amongst the Army in France (Scholes)  
Musical Recitation Lectures to Troops (G.C. Ashton-Johnson)  
Give the Troops Classical Concerts; A Soldier's Plea for Good Music (Corporal R.P. Foster)  
The Soldiers' Applause (A YMCA worker/anonymous)

The issue had broad appeal, not only to those interested in soldiers overseas, but also to those interested in providing music for soldiers at home. Again, the type of music that 'Tommy' wanted, or was deemed to need, is the focus of attention, in an article entitled 'Soldiers' Concerts: A Plea for Good Music.'

The article was by John Baillie, a YMCA volunteer and coordinator in France.<sup>33</sup> Although not performing music himself, his role would have kept him in close contact with the type and nature of performances, and he would have recognised the benefit of such activities on the men with whose recreation he was so connected. Baillie makes an astute observation:

On the whole the difference between the Englishman on active service and the Englishman at home has surely been exaggerated in the popular estimate. The 'Tommy'

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<sup>33</sup> Baillie was at the time teaching at Edinburgh University in philosophy; later he became a well-known Divinity professor.

is constantly taken to be a new sort of being that has recently sprung into existence among us, or at any rate a previously rare variety of Englishman that has since 1914 become very common indeed. In particular it is assumed that Tommy's tastes, whether as regards entertainments or education or religious instruction, form a new quantity which must be reckoned with in quite a new way. Surely this is a fallacy. The Army now is not a class by itself, but just the manhood of England. 'The Tommy' means hardly more or less than the Englishman. And it is difficult to believe that either the musical taste or the educational requirements of the average Englishman have been radically changed by the special circumstances of the war.<sup>34</sup>

Baillie's contention that the war was not a catalyst for immediate change in the musical taste or educational requirements of most people may have been partially true, although it takes no account of the fact that soldiers audiences were likely to be constituted of an unusual mix of educational and class backgrounds. In addition, those involved in wartime musical life felt that circumstances did indeed create new audiences, introduce people to music that they might not have otherwise encountered, as well as demonstrating the practical worth and value of music, as we saw summarised at the end of chapter four. Whilst his view that the soldier was just an ordinary Englishman is in one respect clear-sighted, the situation was perhaps more complicated than Baillie realised. The enforced separation from home did indeed mean that men were looking for not only comfort but stimulation, and in many cases the provision of music for serving soldiers allowed people to hear music for the first time that they might not otherwise have encountered.

Baillie was correct, however, to stress the connection between the man and the soldier, between home and fighting fronts. Britain, with no tradition of conscription, had a pre-war army whose officer class believed itself a superior guardian of tradition, and a rank and file which 'tended to be vagabonds who could find no better occupation,' as DeGroot has put it.<sup>35</sup> This was an army which 'everyone believed was essential but few people really loved;'<sup>36</sup> whose members even in the very late nineteenth century were held in such low esteem that they were sometimes denied entry to bars and theatres. At the outbreak of war, the army seemed a thing utterly apart from the majority of the population. The increase in the army's size meant that more people acquired a direct and personal connection with soldiering and began increasingly to realise that this 'new army' was in fact a collection of men like any other. Their duties and experiences were far removed from the norm, but Baillie's observation that the army in the war was 'just the manhood of England' (leaving

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<sup>34</sup> John Baillie, 'Soldiers' Concerts: A Plea for Good Music,' *MStud*, 1/9/1917, 11.

<sup>35</sup> DeGroot, *Blighty*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, 15.



aside his use of the word England where Britain would have been more appropriate, especially considering that Baillie himself was a Scot) shows that the army may also be taken as representative of the population as a whole.

In the climate of musical and educational reform that had become established in the late nineteenth century, the chance to educate and improve the lot of this vast group of people would have seemed natural. In Bourdieusian terms, it was an instance where the dominated class were suddenly presented to the dominant class, who could choose whether to impose (or to attempt to impose) their own views and tastes upon them. Lancelot wrote in October 1914 of the paucity of musical choices offered to the majority of people, which he felt resulted directly in the shoddy state of soldiers' tunes, claiming that the pre-war state of musical education of the masses was the reason soldiers were partial to 'commonplace' music:

It is to be regretted that many of the most treasured recollections of our soldiers should be associated with verses of such little literary merit and music of such commonplace kind, but the person to blame is not the soldier but those who in times of peace provide such poor fare for him. [...] The majority of music-hall songs and popular ballads have very little artistic merit, the words are frequently little more than a jingle of rhymes and poverty-stricken ideas, their sentiment is superficial and the music little more than a rearrangement of well-worn phrases. This is why so few patriotic songs really appeal to an audience. [...]

Musicians try to raise the taste of the public because they know that anything really artistic will give greater and more lasting enjoyment than the crude, clumsy and ill-balanced; but all such efforts are futile unless the more refined is introduced by slow degrees and really made an educative process. The colours and fashions of garments that prove attractive in the East End are unsalable in the West. The reasons for this are obvious and admitted; the same laws hold good with regard to music. The mind that requires gaudy colour rejoices in blatant tunes and tawdry sentiment, just the same as the cultured eye finds exquisite pleasure in delicate tints and subtleties of tone. If we want our soldiers to sing in the trenches and on the march songs that are really worthy of their valour, we must raise their taste in times of peace, not send them to the fight with poetic effusions which do not express either their point of view or their sentiments.<sup>37</sup>

Such writing evidently reveals much of the class assumptions almost inevitably made in such discussions and it is possible to correlate these assumptions with Pierre Bourdieu's findings in *Distinction*. Certain pieces of music or tastes appreciated by one group were dismissed by another group, as here with the description of the 'gaudy' tastes of the 'masses'. There was a defined stratification of acceptable taste in minds of commentators. The equation of 'lower' classes in the above quotation, with 'blatant tunes' and 'tawdry sentiment' set against the 'cultured eye' which appreciates 'delicate

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<sup>37</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Soldiers' Songs,' *Ref*, 11/10/1914, 7.

tints and subtleties of tone' is evidence of the practice which Bourdieu highlighted, in which the dominant class dictates what and what is not acceptable. The dominated class is clearly perceived as inferior.

The interesting challenge that the war raises is the desire among those who consider themselves taste-makers to extend the purview of their legitimate tastes, as I discussed in chapter one. Bourdieu's view is that culture fulfils a function of legitimating social differences,<sup>38</sup> but he also recognises what he describes as the 'deep ambivalence' experienced by those who both wish to widen their audience and yet maintain their sphere of influence.<sup>39</sup> The experience of many during the war was a more urgent wish to be involved in cultural proselytism, which was certainly the case with many involved in music for troops. Judgements of what soldiers could and should like was a recurrent theme in musical comment of the time, and varying views were expressed, as discussed in this chapter.

Some commentators accepted that what appealed to the soldier was *per se* of value, even if one did not agree with the taste. An early comment on the taste of soldiers, one firmly rooted in class assumption, came from Ernest Newman. Newman, who in peacetime one cannot imagine commenting seriously on music-hall songs and their spiritual validity in the *Musical Times*, nonetheless wrote:

From musical food that I should call unbearably coarse or insufferably sloppy [the soldier] seems to extract at least as much spiritual nourishment as I can extract from Bach or Wagner; and I am not at all prepared to say that, in the last resort, it is not spiritual nourishment of much the same kind as well as the same degree.<sup>40</sup>

Newman was not entirely converted into a broad-minded critic tolerant of popular music, but the war had, at the very least, caused a temporary reassessment of his notions of the boundaries of valid musical art. He was writing following a visit to a university hall now serving as a hospital for soldiers. Newman observed the requests sent up to the organist playing for the patients, and noted the effect of the music on those suffering that he could see present before him:

All that the musical culture of my life has been devoted to obtaining for me seemed to fall away from me like a useless garment: as one thought of the broken bodies in the hall below, and what those bodies had endured day after day that we might live at ease at

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<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, xxx.

<sup>39</sup> Bourdieu, *ibid.*, 226.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

home, the touch of shame was inseparable from the thought of that ease put it out of the question that one should coddle his soul with the customary dainties of music.<sup>41</sup>

Lest we credit wartime casualties with too much power to change entrenched views, we should note that Newman's views of taste in music and the power of music were within the framework of his own class understanding, and thus his own generalisations on the working class. However, it is still significant to notice that for a few moments, however brief, he was prepared to equate the wounded soldier's requests for 'Tipperary' with Bach and Beethoven.<sup>41</sup> The social differences he and many others felt so keenly were, in the greater cause, temporarily glossed over.

The debate about musical taste and soldiers continued whether or not the soldiers themselves were stationed in England, France, Salonika or elsewhere. The sheer number of variables (the performers, the abilities of those same performers, the choices made by them in the programmes they presented, not to mention the variety of types and backgrounds of members of the audience) all conspire to show that one cannot lay down any firm conclusions about soldiers' tastes during the war, although the topic was a live one throughout the war's duration.

### 5.3 Music for Troops at Home

A wide variety of schemes was created to provide music for soldiers. Soldiers at home, whether on military duty for the duration at home, temporarily at home through convalescence or for training, or at home prior to being deployed overseas, were largely dependent on whether or not their units were visited by performers. Some were fortunate enough to be visited by competent concert parties, but some received the sorts of visits that might best be described as 'well-meaning.' There was no independent body for assessing or otherwise controlling the types of musical visitors that camps, hospitals and other military centres received. Soldiers did often generate their own music, of course, and letters to musical journals often referred to makeshift bands.<sup>42</sup>

Although I examine Isidore de Lara's War Emergency Entertainments in more detail

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<sup>41</sup> See Section 4.1 above.

<sup>42</sup> For example, an editorial in the *Musical Standard* refers to the difficulty that musical soldiers had of getting together to perform in the absence of instruments, asking the public to assist where possible by donating material and instruments. 'Notes and Comments,' *MS*, 7/11/1914, 318.

in the next chapter, one particular incident that he experienced is in order here, to show the effects of the unregulated scheme on captive audiences, in this case, wounded and convalescent soldiers.

The hall where the entertainments took place holds some ten or twelve hundred people. At the hour appointed for the concert to start there were only about a dozen men present [...] Seeing one of the orderlies, I asked him whether there had not been some mistake with regard to the hour of the starting.

'No, sir,' he replied, 'we already know, if you will start.'

'But where is the audience?' I asked.

'Oh, that'll be all right, sir, if your show is a good one,' answered the orderly. 'You see, it's like this, sir, lately we have had some rotten entertainments provided by ladies, and the men won't stick them, so now they send in a few "scouts" to report on the quality. This being your first concert that's what's happening to-night. These "scouts" will go out after the first or second item, and if their report is a favourable one, you'll find the men will come all right.' And so it happened – we started the concert practically to empty benches, but by the time the third turn had appeared the men came pouring in, and before we had reached the end of the first part of the programme the hall was crowded.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly the standard of entertainments provided for soldiers varied widely. Sometimes concerts were given on wards, obliging patients to listen whether they wished or not. Harry Lauder wrote in his memoir that not every artist who had 'tried to help in the hospitals' had 'fully understood the men he or she wanted to please,' describing a 'great, serious actor' unwilling to demean himself with lightweight entertainment: after four verses of *The Wreck of the Hesperus* declaimed in increasingly mournful but powerful tones, his audience dived as one under their bedcovers in response to a shouted 'To Cover' from a fellow patient.<sup>44</sup>

Inevitably there is a degree of overlap between the question of taste in music for soldiers, and the ways in which music was provided for them. The matter was raised in the *Referee* in 1915, when Lancelot elucidated his belief in the significance of camp concerts, and the importance of careful consideration of their content:

Soldiers' concerts [...] vary very greatly in their success, particularly those which are organised by local amateurs with the best intentions but little attention to what is really required. [...] The best model for Camp Concerts is the form of entertainment which the men themselves sought before the war began. In the large majority of cases this is a variety show [...] The humorous being the chief aim, there is always a tendency to

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<sup>43</sup> De Lara, *Many Tales*, 260-261. It will be seen from the evidence of Lena Ashwell's concert parties, later in the chapter, that being a 'lady' was no bar to providing quality, and highly popular, concerts for soldiers. In this case, it is likely to have been over-enthusiastic amateurs or poor choice of programme, which were to blame.

<sup>44</sup> Lauder, *A Minstrel in France*, 139-141: 'The great actor, astonished beyond measure, was left there, reciting away to shaking mounds of bedclothes that entrenched his hearers from the sound of his voice!' (141). Lauder himself always felt that he performed to repay servicemen for their work on the country's behalf.

descend to the comic, and from thence to degenerate into idiocy. The only effective break to this downward progress is a touch of the serious. [...] It will always be found advantageous to break the flow of humour by serious songs or recitations, but this should always be of the best [...] It should be remembered [...] that training camps include men of all classes, and that in an exceptional degree there are many tastes to consider. I am convinced that many music-hall managers underrate the intelligence and requirements of their audiences. This fault should be guarded against in Camp Concerts.<sup>45</sup>

There were various schemes devised for providing entertainment for troops stationed at home, such as the Broadwood Camp Concerts, and the Camp Concerts Fund. Such schemes sent concert parties to camps either on an *ad hoc* or a regular basis and often musicians and music teachers spent their holidays in such work. In addition, soldiers and sailors were welcomed into regular concert audiences. The presence of a significant number of khaki-clad audience members usually attracted comment in the press.<sup>46</sup>

Entry to concerts was often free for members of the forces, or in other cases, concerts were put on especially for the wounded. Such men wore special blue uniforms that easily distinguished them. Reznick has described the wounded soldiers' uniform as 'ill-fitting, bright-coloured and pocketless outfits,' which 'failed to confer a deserved dignity of public appearance and a sense of masculine independence,' although some wearers appreciated the assumption of a group identity.<sup>47</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that a group of people already having experienced the horrors of warfare, and forced into an identity which they had little control of, might in turn resent the imposition of concerts, as seen in the example of de Lara's reluctant audience, above.

The nature of programming for such audiences was debated in the musical press, and sometimes found wanting, as for example when a programme was felt to have been peculiarly morbid rather than uplifting. This was noted by Parry in December 1917, when he attended a 'choral commemoration' in the Albert Hall. This event was, as Lancelot described it in the *Referee* was to be 'A choral commemoration of the heroic deeds of the first Seven Divisions (Mons to Ypres, 1914) [...] designed to show the

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<sup>45</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Soldiers' Concerts,' *Ref*, 15/8/1915, 6. Leask has pointed out that, in her concert work for troops, Lena Ashwell (who will be considered below) 'consciously ignored any inverted snobbery directed at the "high arts."' Leask also states that Ashwell agreed with Lancelot on the subject of not underrating the tastes and interests of a soldier audience: 'There is a tendency of the superior person [...] to imagine the best in literature, art, music and drama was rather above the heads of the people, and that an expressively cultivated mind was necessary for real appreciation. There never was a greater mistake.' Lena Ashwell, *Era*, 27/12/1916, quoted in Leask, *Lena Ashwell*, 136.

<sup>46</sup> See for example Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 6/9/1914 and 'Matters Musical: Looking Back,' *Ref*, 25/7/1915; 'War Songs Past and Present,' *MH*, 1/11/1914, 398.

<sup>47</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 6-7.

various phrases of national sentiment from pre-War days to the present time,<sup>48</sup> and the programme included Elgar's 'Cockaigne' overture, Stanford's 'Farewell,' and Parry's motet, 'There is an Old Belief.' Afterwards in his diary, Parry recorded that the whole plan was poorly conceived:

Huge gathering very impressive. Long rows of khaki in the boxes. The scheme of the Concert was unfortunately misconceived, as it was mainly in the mournful key of regret for those who had fallen, whereas the soldiers were not concerned for that but were in an exuberant state ready for triumphant exhilaration at coming together again with a sense of humour. They bore it meekly. But it was oppressive.<sup>49</sup>

In this case, Parry felt that commemoration had been conflated with solemnity, the last thing he thought that the soldiers wanted: his recognition of their exuberance is one example of the way in which conflicting assumptions were, and still are, made about the state of mind of soldiers, and what musically (or otherwise) would suit them.

Before examining as a case study Lena Ashwell's concert parties for troops overseas, a different and far smaller scale scheme merits investigation. This was one established very early in the war, and was founded to enable soldiers to provide music for themselves, by supplying them with mouth-organs.

## 5.4 Mouth-Organs for Soldiers – a Campaign

In the first months of the war, *Musical News* established a fund to purchase mouth-organs to send out to soldiers and sailors, to enable men to entertain themselves and others. Collins has described the mouth-organ as 'the most popular instrument, because of its portability.'<sup>50</sup> Not universally popular, other scholars have noted that where musical provision was limited only to the mouth-organ, it was not highly rated.<sup>51</sup> However, as a means of individual entertainment, and sometimes as part of music for a group, many soldiers were keen to obtain mouth-organs. Readers of the *Musical News* were invited to send in financial contributions and the journal kept its readers up to date with progress, publishing letters from grateful soldiers and accounts of how the instruments were used. The *Music Student* also asked its readers

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<sup>48</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 9/12/1917, 3.

<sup>49</sup> ShulbredeD, 5/12/1917.

<sup>50</sup> Collins, *Theatre at War*, 60.

<sup>51</sup> Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in War-time,' 296.

to contribute to the fund run by the *News*, and other commentators such as Robin Legge of the *Daily Telegraph*, made mention of it.

From its inception, the gifts were gratefully received:

You can never have done anything which has achieved such an outburst of assent from those for whom it was intended, as the starting and carrying out of this Fund. One has only to read the letters to feel that the elementary human nature in those men in the trenches is speaking out straight from the heart.<sup>52</sup>

Serving soldiers responded enthusiastically to the scheme:

It was as welcome as the flowers in May. We get plenty of music of a kind – Turkish shells and bullets; but me and my mate couldn't realise our good fortune, getting a real instrument. We have many a pleasant hour at nights in our dugout, playing the old songs.<sup>53</sup>

Letters came from the men themselves but also those responsible for them, such as this letter from a military headquarters in Rouen:

Your gift is such a valuable one that we have been anxious not to squander it, but to make the best use of it we could. What we are doing is to give a few to each draft of reinforcements that goes up to the front from here. There is always at least one accomplished instrumentalist in a draft, and as the men swing down from camp to the station en route for the trenches, his music puts life into their marching and leads the songs, which the troops love to sing. No one could hear or see the effect of these little mouth-organs without realising what a valuable gift they are and how much they are appreciated.<sup>54</sup>

Soldiers who received one of the mouth organs often acknowledged the generosity of the donors:

'Dear Readers of Musical News, I am one of the soldiers that received a mouth-organ, and wish to thank you very kindly for it; it helps to pass away many a weary hour both for my comrades and myself in the trenches. To-night, sitting round our fire, we are having a merry party, playing and singing as many old songs as we can bring to mind; and I hope it will please the readers of Musical News to know that one little musical instrument has brought a great lot of happiness to a group of Tommies at the Front.'<sup>55</sup>

Occasionally, the usefulness of the mouth-organ was demonstrated in unusual ways:

Three soldiers were having a long argument over the distribution of some 'loot' or souvenirs – somewhere in France. This consisted of a watch, a compass, a German knife,

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<sup>52</sup> 'Mouth Organs for the Front,' *MN*, 30 /10/1915 , 407.

<sup>53</sup> W. Lythgoe, 'Thanks for Mouth Organs,' *MN*, 23/10/1915, 383.

<sup>54</sup> A. W. Cockburn, 'Letters,' *MN*, 11/12/1915, 550.

<sup>55</sup> 'Mouth Organs for the Front,' *MN*, 1/1/1916, 11. The letters in this issue of *Musical News* also included one from a sailor who had been sent a mouth organ, who was delighted to have a means of keeping awake those on watch at night.

and a belt, in addition to other treasures. The watch was the coveted possession, and it was finally decided that it should go to the man who could guess the name of a tune played on a mouth-organ by another Tommy standing by. After several 'shots,' it was finally suggested that 'Beer! Beer! Glorious Beer!' was the air being rendered. 'You're wrong, but you ain't far orf it,' exclaimed the organist. The tune I was playing was "As pants the 'art for coolin' streams."'<sup>56</sup>

Aware of the lack of reputation of the humble mouth-organ, occasionally the music press felt obliged to justify the interest shown in an instrument not normally featured in their pages. For example, the *Musical News* cited a correspondent in the *British Bandoman*: 'Talk to the supersensitive musicians about the beauties of the mouth-organ and he will laugh at what he imagines your simplicity, but if the mouth-organ is capable of giving so much pleasure I say by all means let us have the mouth-organ.'<sup>57</sup> In general, the mouth-organ was celebrated for its portability and its help in providing a real solace and comfort, by means of musical association and distraction, to soldiers serving in appalling conditions.

The campaign was championed in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Referee*: Lancelot noted, 'Of late we have been hearing a great deal about mouth-organs, and many good folk have been diligently collecting these instruments and sending them to our troops.'<sup>58</sup> In 1917, the *Referee* also noted:

A mouth-organ is accounted but a small thing, and has not been considered seriously by musicians, but the need for music at the Front has invested it with astonishing importance. Few instruments are more portable or more easily played, and they have contributed so much to the cheerfulness of the troops.<sup>59</sup>

Private Harry Steggles, who served with Vaughan Williams in the Royal Army Medical Corps territorial force, played the mouth-organ. In a memoir of his time with Vaughan Williams, Steggles recalls 'Bob' (RVW), being intrigued with his playing of

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<sup>56</sup> 'Musical War Notes,' *MN*, 18/12/1915, 528. The collection of souvenirs was a normal part of military life: even Percy Scholes came home with 'carefully chosen relics (to wit: one British shell case, one German ditto, one German bayonet, two tins of bully beef, three spent cartridges, and one unspent, a tin trench hat, and a wounded periscope).' Percy Scholes, 'The Best Job In France: A Musician's Experiences,' *MStu* 12/1917, 135. This is an important point: in her study of Ivor Gurney and Marion Scott, Pamela Blevins shows a failure of understanding of the reality of war time life when she notes that Scott must have been offended by Gurney's acquisition of 'salvage': 'The base reality was that Ivor Gurney, the sensitive and gentle poet-composer, had killed other men, scavenged their rotting mutilated bodies, stolen from them without a pang of guilt and then expressed regret that he was not able to steal more ... Ivor confided in Marion that after one battle he had spent an hour taking tea and sugar from dead men. He called this activity 'salvaging'.' Pamela Blevins, *Ivor Gurney and Marion Scott: Song of Pain and Beauty* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), 133. Blevins gives no evidence that Scott herself was distressed by these remarks of Gurney.

<sup>57</sup> 'Miscellaneous Notes,' *MN*, 9/10/1916, 342.

<sup>58</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 10/1/1915, 5.

<sup>59</sup> 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 25/2/1917, 5.



the mouth-organ, as well as marching along to it.<sup>60</sup> The fact that Steggles says later in his recollections that he cannot play an instrument reveals his lowly opinion of the mouth-organ, but its comfort and solace to soldiers was very real, as the many letters sent to the *Musical News* testify.

Interest in the campaign remained high until early 1917, but with diminishing donations, the *Musical News* decided to close the Fund at the end of March that year. However, at no stage did the appreciation of the scheme's success diminish. A fictional account of the life of one mouth-organ and how it assisted in the war, published in the *Musical News*, epitomises the perhaps sentimental affection in which this small instrument was held; this article is given in full in the Appendices.

## 5.5 Music for Troops Overseas

The mouth-organ's contribution to the well-being of serving forces was appreciated by many, but it was recognised that music in all forms might do much for the mental and physical support of the soldier in the fighting line. Musical provision for soldiers overseas took a variety of forms, some created by the soldiers themselves and some sent out from Britain. Both were commented on in the press. In October 1915, Robin Legge wrote at length about 'Music at the Front,'<sup>61</sup> and showed his appreciation of both the formal concert party with classical musicians, sent out from Britain, and the informal, ad hoc, or scratch bands, created with impromptu instruments and mouth-organs:

These parties are as a breath from a new heaven to them. Tommy Atkins, Esq., no doubt loves such music as was forthcoming the other day from the extempore band of a cardboard trombone, a comb with its paper equipment, and a petrol tin, or such as is produced from the mouth organ so much in demand, and upon which many soldiers have become as expert as Paderewski upon the pianoforte. But all this is extraneous. The better the music and the better the performance the more it is enjoyed.<sup>62</sup>

Legge and many other commentators reported in detail on the provision of music for troops serving overseas, and had a great deal to say in support of it. It is no exaggeration to state that in supporting music for serving troops, musicians and

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<sup>60</sup> 'Henry Steggles on VW in the Great War,' *Journal of the RVW Society*, 16, 1999, 21-22. Steggles also recalled VW playing an organ voluntary improvised around the tune 'Make your mind up, Maggie Mackenzie.'

<sup>61</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Music at the Front,' *DT*, 30/10/1915, 13.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* The full article may be found in the Appendices.

musical commentators were in a very real sense contributing to the war effort. Those at home could do little in real and practical terms about engineering victory in a military sense: they could, however, do everything in their power to support soldiers and sailors in other respects, and the provision of music for them, of varying kinds, was, again and again, held up as making a very real difference to the troops' physical and mental well being.

While Legge and others reported very favourably about the provision of music for troops, giving a definite implication that the events they reported upon were the experience of many, in fact such reporting was inevitably coloured by either the commentators' choice of material, or by their limited knowledge: in other words, consciously or unconsciously only a partial picture was being given. Whilst it is not possible to gauge the experience of every soldier, a correlative can be found in occasional comments in diaries, for example that of a Major Cockman, quoted by Collins, who found the concerts available to him at company and battalion level to be 'not always of the highest order,' and certainly of a lower quality than those available at divisional headquarters.<sup>63</sup>

Music for soldiers overseas was provided by a great many different initiatives. The work of the army's own concert parties (although these are outside the scope of this study, Materiality 10 illustrates the variety of such army initiatives) were little referred to in the press, although on occasion such parties undertook performances in London, which were then reviewed. One group was praised for its 'ability, sense of humour, and spirit,' and the 'songs, concerted numbers, and sketches' were described as executed with 'a high order of excellence.'<sup>64</sup> Fuller examines the work of such groups in detail, which was organised at divisional, brigade and even battalion levels, noting that military authorities were sometimes reluctant to back such enterprises:

Some disapproved of such 'luxuries' as out of keeping with a serious national effort; others maintained that 'such trifles made the men "soft" and unfitted them for hard

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<sup>63</sup> Collins, *Theatre at War*, 102-3, quoting the Cockman diaries 1916-18 held at the IWM.

<sup>64</sup> 'At Wigmore Hall has been given a series of musical performances by a company formed from the Twenty-fifth Field Division. It appears that each Division in the field is allowed thirty men to form a band and twelve men as a concert troupe for entertainment purposes. The company appearing at Wigmore Hall, styling itself "The Pierrots," consists of men who are unfit for present duty in the trenches, but every one of them has been in the firing line. How many professionals there are in the company was not revealed, and it might be that constant performance has given the men a certainty of touch which very few amateurs possess.' Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: A Unique Pierrot Troupe,' *Ref*, 6/1/1918, 3.

trench warfare conditions'; [...] 'others again simply protested that it "wasn't war"'.<sup>65</sup>

Fuller's work gives valuable corroboration from military sources that entertainment was essential to troop morale, and it should be remembered that although he writes of music-hall style entertainment, and its key element, making humour out of grim reality, all forms of entertainment were valued: 'The applause was vociferous, the laughter deafening. If it was medicine as I believed it to be, then it was swallowed in great gulps.'<sup>66</sup> This is confirmed by Edmund Blunden's account of the audience's emotional reaction to the song *Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty*:

The barn roof ought indeed to have floated away on the paeans and warbling that rose from us [...] we roared inanely, and when a creditable cardboard train was jerked across the stage and performers looking out of the windows sang their chorus 'Birmingham, Leeds or Manchester,' the force of illusion could no further go.<sup>67</sup>

The type of concert party that was most commented on in publications in Britain was that made up of civilian performers who travelled out to where the soldiers were. Of these, Lena Ashwell's scheme was the highest profile and a suitable focus for investigation here since Ashwell was a well-known figure in British theatre and her endeavours for the soldiers were widely reported.<sup>68</sup> Her wartime work was arranged through a committee of the YMCA. The YMCA's role in the provision of these concerts was crucial. Under their auspices, a great deal of practical aid was given under very trying conditions. Reading first-hand accounts of the conditions for YMCA volunteers and staff is a corrective to the dismissive notions of men of the cloth in wartime, particularly Anglican.<sup>69</sup> The support given to Ashwell's work,

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<sup>65</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 95. He uses material from W. N. Nicholson's *Behind the Lines* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), 72. Nicholson was a staff officer and his account of how entertainments were seen by some who were themselves removed from the fighting line, offer a valuable perspective. See also Fuller, 94-110 for his useful analysis of the types of material performed at such parties, which he describes as in style 'unmistakably that of music-hall.'

<sup>66</sup> Nicholson, *Behind the Lines*, 256, quoted in Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 98.

<sup>67</sup> Edmund Blunden, *Undertones of War* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1937), 128. Also quoted in Collins, *Theatre at War*, 102.

<sup>68</sup> Ashwell (1872-1957) was active in various fields during the war apart from the 'Concerts at the Front.' In his 1918 memoir, Sir Frederick Bridge mentions her by name as being one of the speakers at an early war meeting in support of Recruiting Bands (Bridge, *A Westminster Pilgrim* (London: Novello, 1918) 241); Eric Coates names her alongside a veritable litany of the pre-war musical great and good that used to frequent Pagani's Restaurant, as being one of the many sources of amusing anecdotes about life in musical London before the young Coates came to know it (Coates, *Suite in Four Movements* (London: Heinemann, 1953), 129. She was also one of the motivating forces behind the *Chelsea Revue* for which Elgar was commissioned to compose *The Sanguine Fan*.

<sup>69</sup> See Rachel Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' 344, for a summary of the perceived relative ineffectualness of the Anglican chaplains in the forces. Recent scholarship seeks to give a fairer picture of the YMCA's work: for example, Michael Snape's introduction to the memoirs of Barclay Baron (an Anglican layman involved in the Oxford Bermondsey Mission settlement who after the war worked closely with the charity Toc H) highlights that the memoirs assist in fleshing out 'an emerging revisionist consensus' on the rôle of the churches in the war: 'Pilloried by Christian pacifists in the

among others, demonstrates that the YMCA was a generous and far-reaching organisation which made a real difference to the lives of soldiers.

*Tommy's Triangle*, published at the height of the war, in 1917, gives an account of the YMCA's activities, and disabuses us of the notion that the public at home were very largely in ignorance of the day-to-day life of the soldier. Although they may not have had first-hand experience of the appalling conditions, they were intellectually aware of what was happening.

If, gentle reader, you can imagine yourself 'fed up' with fog, mud, cold, rats and perhaps another class of vermin, not to mention exploding shells and whizzing bullets; if, furthermore, you can conceive of yourself toiling for hours in that horrid neighbourhood, mending trenches and burying the dead; then perhaps you will be able to picture the expression on Tommy's face as, munching, he hugged his warm mug and peered around at the home-like haven that was affording him so soothing a respite and rest.<sup>70</sup>

The work of the YMCA during the war was centred principally on its 'huts,' both at home and overseas, the usual venue for musical events, although concerts occasionally took place in the open air. Copping details the various functions a hut could fulfil: an emporium (the larger huts acted as tobacconists, confectioners or grocers); a restaurant; a club with free writing materials (postage paid by the YMCA) and the necessary quiet for correspondence; a library (with newspapers and periodicals); a place to play games; a cinema; a concert hall; an occasional theatre; and finally a church, since all huts, while 'temples of practical Christianity' on weekdays became on Sundays also 'the official places of worship.'<sup>71</sup> It is understandable that Copping should have written so positively and generously about the huts, as he was a YMCA insider, but current scholarship has also discovered that the huts were of great value to the men, for example Jeffery Reznick's work. Reznick

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inter-war and Cold War periods, the conduct of the British churches in the First World War has long been associated with the image of bellicose bishops, compromised clergy and ineffectual chaplains, an image popularised, above all, by the poetry and prose of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves.' *The Back Parts of War: The YMCA Memoirs and Letters of Barclay Baron, 1915 to 1919* ed. Michael Snape (Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell, 2009), 16. Nonetheless, many did find religious provision inadequate or meaningless. Frederick Plimmer, a civilian working in shipyards who spent a year in France in 1917, recalled in an interview given in the 1980s for the IWM that 'Padres used to come along the line every now and then and talk to us [...] the usual guff, that sort of thing. [...] I dare say they had religious dos in these canteens but I never went to any of them.' IWM interview recorded 1986, catalogue no 9423.

<sup>70</sup> Arthur Copping, *Tommy's Triangle* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), 48. The broader role of the YMCA is also admirably summed up in its wartime context by Snape: [A] story ... of unstinting and courageous service by thousands of church people, clergy and laity alike, to those who bore the brunt of a terrible war that was steadfastly held to be just by the vast majority of the British people. Snape, *Back Parts of War*, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Copping, *Tommy's Triangle*, 89.

finds that the huts were highly valued for the *esprit de corps* that they offered, which included: 'offering the company of women, providing opportunities to become consumers of comforts such as decent meals, non-alcoholic refreshment and proper entertainment.'<sup>72</sup> He has also noted that huts were an essential locus of 'the sense of masculine comradeship' that existed among the huts' patrons, quoting one memoir which describes the huts as 'a *vital factor* in the carrying-on of the struggle.'<sup>73</sup>

Lena Ashwell's background in both music and theatre, combined with her managerial and entrepreneurial skills, made her extremely well suited to mastermind a scheme of musical and dramatic entertainment for soldiers overseas. Having studied at the Royal Academy of Music (in 1889 receiving a medal for elocution from Ellen Terry), she chose to concentrate on drama rather than music. She went on to have a successful career as an actress, working alongside Henry Irving among others, before becoming one of the early female actor-managers.<sup>74</sup> When war broke out, she threw herself into general support for women, working with the Women's Emergency Corps, which Lady Randolph Churchill described in 1916 as 'perhaps the largest of all the Women's Organisations for the relief of war distress.'<sup>75</sup> Ashwell had 'always longed that artists might have their proper recognition as a great arm of National Service,'<sup>76</sup> and was determined to find a place for the arts as well as practical relief in service of the war effort, an argument she expounded in her 1922 memoir of her wartime activities, *Modern Troubadours*:

Does not the playing of music incite men to lay aside their cares and the turmoil of the daily struggle; to let something beautiful, invisible, and healing cleanse and beautify their souls?<sup>77</sup>

Her own initial approaches to the War Office about forming a concert party for troops at the front were refused, a refusal she believed was due to innate suspicion of

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<sup>72</sup> Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 5.

<sup>73</sup> See Reznick, *Healing the Nation*, 138. The memoir Reznick quotes is Captain Jeffery Ramsay's *The Outside Edge of Battle: Some Recollections of a Casualty Clearing Station* (Blackburn: Standard Press, 1919), 4-5.

<sup>74</sup> See both Leask's comprehensive biography of Ashwell (*Lena Ashwell: Actress, Patriot, Pioneer*) and Claire Hirshfield, 'The Actress as social activist: the case of Lena Ashwell' in Ronald L. Dotterer and Susan Bowers *Politics, Gender, and the Arts: Women, the Arts, and Society* (Cranbury, NJ; London and Mississauga, Ontario: Associated University Presses, 1992), 72-86.

<sup>75</sup> *Women's War Work* 1916 ed. Lady Randolph Churchill (non-paginated).

<sup>76</sup> Lena Ashwell, *Modern Troubadours: A Record of the Concerts at the Front* (London and Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1922), 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 4.

the theatrical profession.<sup>78</sup> However, a few months into the war, she was approached by the Women's Auxiliary Committee of the YMCA, to enquire if she could arrange and send out a party for recreation for the men in Base Camps in France. The combination of the YMCA and Princess Helena Victoria, who supported the scheme, was sufficiently influential with the War Office to persuade them to try the experiment of sending recreation for the relief of the 'very suffering state of the men' who had 'passed through a very difficult period of fighting'.<sup>79</sup>

The first concert party in early 1915 gave thirty-nine concerts in thirteen days, and was warmly welcomed. Ashwell toured Britain to raise funds and audition potential performers, in order to send out more parties. Within a short time, dozens of such parties were being sent out, and Ashwell's memoir records the history of the organisation, which ultimately sent parties to the firing line and as far afield as Egypt and Palestine.<sup>80</sup> The funds necessary for these concert tours, even when artists were paid only expenses, were difficult to obtain, and Ashwell devoted herself to enormous efforts of publicity, writing pamphlets, giving interviews and arranging fund-raising concerts at home in Britain. The cost of employing the artists, the vast majority of whom were glad to be in remunerated employment at a difficult time, varied. Ashwell noted:

The fees paid on the touring parties varied. Many artists went for nothing; but the lines on which we worked were to make it possible for the artist to go, and the fees were paid not according to the artistic or money-making powers of the artist, but rather with a view to meeting the out-of-pocket expenses which would go on at home while they were abroad.<sup>81</sup>

A summary given in the *Musical Herald* in 1915, quoting Ashwell herself, shows the variety of her work:

'Each party generally gives three concerts daily – in the afternoon at hospitals or convalescent camps, and in the evening at the different YMCA huts which are distributed all over the camp areas – and camps for the remounts, ordnance workers, dockers, veterinary camps for the care of sick and wounded horses, motor and forage depots, and the bakery camps, thus cheering the many thousands whose work [...] is monotonous though vital to the Army.'

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<sup>78</sup> Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 5. She also notes in the memoir that such suspicions were reduced by the war: 'Some good things did come to us through the war, and one of them was the breaking down of barriers due to misunderstanding, and perhaps one of the biggest barriers has had large gaps made in it by the co-operation of actors and musicians with the YMCA.'

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, 124. See also Materiality 9.

<sup>81</sup> Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 36-37.

[...] Each party consists of six artists, three men and three women, a tenor, soprano, bass, contralto, entertainer, violinist, or 'cellist. The accompanist remains in France to make all arrangement with the YMCA and secure accommodation for the artists.<sup>82</sup>

By 1916, permission had been given for Ashwell to send concert parties to the firing line, although women performers were not permitted to undertake this work. Many accounts of these concerts reached the British press. An extract by Ashwell written in *Told in the Huts*, a 1916 publication designed as a gift for soldiers, written by 'soldiers and warworkers,'<sup>83</sup> gives a first-hand account of such work:

The concerts are given anywhere – in huts and warehouses; in the summer by the roadside, in woods, or open fields; or barns under heavy shell fire. A member of one of our Firing Line Parties wrote: 'You will be sorry to hear that one of our huts near the line has been blown to pieces. We were singing there only a few nights before. The guns were very busy then. Can you imagine what it feels like to sing Handel's "Largo" to the sound of a cannon? [...] We have been bombed in our billets, gassed and shelled. What more can a fellow want? We are the happiest of concert parties.' Another letter from a Firing line Concert Party says: 'Yesterday we performed in a Trappist monastery which has been turned into a rest home. We played in the refectory to about four hundred officers and men from the trenches, all with that dreadful "trench look" in their eyes. But, glory be! We took it out for an hour and a half. Our reception was astounding. They went mad over every item – seized everything with rapture. I got them nearly hysterical with laughter, and the important Army Medical Officer in charge assured us that the beneficial effects of our performance on the patients would be enormous, and that the work we are doing is of great military value.'<sup>84</sup>

The value of such commentary in the press at the time is that it often drew on direct first-hand accounts from those involved in the concert parties, rather than judgements made at a distance. Of course, the comments chosen for publication would be positive ones, as the work required continual funding, but anecdotal evidence backs up the general impression given in the press. This may be seen, for example, in a letter written to Ashwell from Theodore Flint, the musical director and accompanist who went with the first concert party and continued working with Ashwell, eventually travelling out to Egypt where he was immortalised in Sassoon's poem *Concert Party* (see Materiality 9). Ashwell had asked Flint to report on each member of the party.

They are all so excellent in their way, and are all so obliging and charming, and don't mind a bit how much they sing or what they do. ... During the songs, or whatever it is, you could hear a pin drop, but when it is all over the roars and yells are simply thrilling.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> 'Echoes of the Month,' *MH*, 1/8/1915, 362-3.

<sup>83</sup> *Told in the Huts: The YMCA Gift Book*, ed. Arthur Yapp (London, Jarrold, 1916).

<sup>84</sup> Lena Ashwell, 'Concert Parties at the Front,' *MH*, 1/2/1917, 41.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Leask, *Lena Ashwell*, 117.

Although the reports of these concert tours were optimistic in tone, they did not deny the realities of shell-fire and heavy fighting: such publications kept the public at home in touch with what efforts musicians were making to take comfort and solace as well as entertainment and distraction, to men very near the front line. The often brutal realities of life at the front line were related directly to musicians and their experiences, as Percy Scholes revealed in the *Music Student*.

In addition to the special issue of the *Music Student* that we examined, Scholes often dedicated space elsewhere to the topic of soldiers and music. In December 1917 he gave a more personal account of his own experiences co-ordinating the music in a rest camp, and did not flinch from giving explicit detail:

'The thing that bothers me most "up the line," said one boy to me, 'is the walking on the dead bodies. That's what I can't forget. Often they're rotten, and bits of their flesh stick to your boots.' Can you wonder that music is needed? Can you be surprised that a fiddler who for three years has never touched his instrument loves to have one in his hand again? Can you realise the amount of 'forgetfulness' it brings him – forgetfulness of the horrible immediate past, and memory of the past of peace-time?'<sup>86</sup>

Scholes asked the musicians who joined his choir and orchestra for the duration of their time at the rest camp to write down some of their war experiences. He quoted one of these essays, from which it will be seen that involvement in music was one way for men in appalling situations to find some distraction:

'Travelling was very difficult as the ground was wet and muddy full of shell holes and covered with dead British and German bodies. The whole place was reeking with powder and blood. The bodies were in various states of decay, some yellow, others almost green and others quite black and mere skeletons. All the way down to the dressing station, which was a mile away, we were being shelled on all sides, but luckily no shells fell near enough to do us harm. Eventually we reached the dressing station, where we placed our patient in safe hands, much to our relief. On returning to my battery I collapsed, absolutely, and for a day *cried continuously* and felt in a state which I cannot put into words.'<sup>87</sup>

Realising that musical distraction was enormously beneficial to soldiers in such conditions meant different things to different concert-givers. It seems safe to assume that each performer, in an Ashwell party or otherwise, would programme according to their own understanding of what was appropriate. We saw above that Ashwell

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<sup>86</sup> Percy Scholes, 'The Best Job In France: A Musician's Experiences,' *MStuð*, 1/12/1917, 135. Such vivid detail is missing from early war accounts of soldiers' experiences, and their presence in publications now is a mark of the recognition by military and political authorities that greater openness with the public was beneficial.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*. This account is from an essay Scholes selected from the papers he received from those in his musical charge. The emphasis is original.



firmly believed in the appeal of 'good' music, but this is not to say that, even if her own concerts were greatly appreciated, the same audiences did not also appreciate different types of music. Julius Harrison (also working under the auspices of the YMCA) wrote in the *Musical Times* of a different view of suitable programming. Although space does not permit a comprehensive survey of the variety of such entertainments, Harrison's writing hints at the enormous differentiation of entertainment presented to soldiers:

It was part of our plan to try and draw 'as many soldiers as possible' into the YMCA huts on the occasions of our concerts, and in this particular we never failed to achieve what we attempted, for most of the troops had been on severely short music rations ever since they left old England. Within three quarters of an hour of our arrival we were giving our first concert in one of those comfortable huts. It was my first experience of the kind and I do not think I shall ever forget the impression it created. Our misery vanished, the trials of our delayed and anxious crossing were forgotten, and we were soon drinking in the intoxicating champagne of such chorus-songs as:- 'Here we are again' and 'Are we downhearted?' Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner were all forgotten, and I came to the conclusion, long before the end of the tour, that there was real genius in these despised rag-times. Could you but hear those music-starved men shouting out these songs with full lung-power, you, too, would come to that conclusion, for rag-times seem to quicken the pulse of the soldier in an extra-ordinary way. They seem to be the external expression of his whole emotional being.<sup>88</sup>

Harrison clearly allowed his programming to be guided by what he perceived the soldiers wanted: he was happy to suspend earlier views of what constituted 'good' music ('Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner are all forgotten') and appreciated the soldiers' own decrees of what they wanted. Mixed audiences, however, would inevitably mean that perhaps the lovers of Brahms and Beethoven were disappointed. Harrison's experience clearly shows that not all providers were seeking to impose views of acceptable taste. It would be fair to say that while Ashwell's parties were also guided to some degree by the wish to please soldiers, they were more committed to a programme of what they perceived to be the 'best' – and this in fact often meant art music. Baron describes Ashwell's concerts as 'comparatively high-brow.'<sup>89</sup>

Lastly, we should note that whatever the intentions of those who organised such schemes, and whatever the rhetoric surrounding both the debate on musical taste and the quality of music supplied for troops, the reality on the ground might well be very different to the ideals, or not suited to many of the audience. A 1916 *Era* article, 'Entertaining Tommy,' reported that British soldiers in Paris found many of the

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<sup>88</sup> Julius Harrison, 'Somewhere in France,' *MT*, 1/7/1915, 400-401.

<sup>89</sup> Snape, *Back Parts of War*, 106.

concert parties provided for them 'straight-laced' and 'patronising.'<sup>90</sup> And whether what soldiers received was the 'best music,' as Ashwell clearly believed her concert parties provided, or something quite different, may have been something of a lottery. In November 1917, an editorial in the *Monthly Musical Record* noted that both the type and quality of music actually performed were very different to claims made by fund-raising publicity for such schemes:

Letters have reached us from many correspondents at the Flanders front complaining of the poor music which even the best artists of the 'Concerts at the Front' parties give to the 'Tommies.' There is no doubt that the members of these parties 'play down' considerably to their audiences – probably unnecessarily so. In all large movements, there is a tendency for the more specialised and particular minority to be ignored completely. This, of course, should not be the case. One correspondent, in particular, demurs at a statement, when pleading for funds for this work: 'We give them nothing but the best music – Bach, Beethoven, and Debussy'; and he thinks that the energetic organiser allows his rhetoric to run away with him, for, he says, he has heard no music at all of these composers from their parties during his three years in France; nor is there a piano along the whole front on which any high-class music could be played. The one on which he operates 'necessitates everything transposed up an augmented fourth.'<sup>91</sup>

A mixed reaction was, of course, inevitable, as was patchy provision in terms of access of skill, but according to Margaret Leask, Ashwell herself resolutely ignored such criticisms and chose to concentrate on the positive.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> John Raphael, 'Entertaining Tommy,' *Era*, 23/8/1916, quoted in Leask, *Lena Ashwell*, 135.

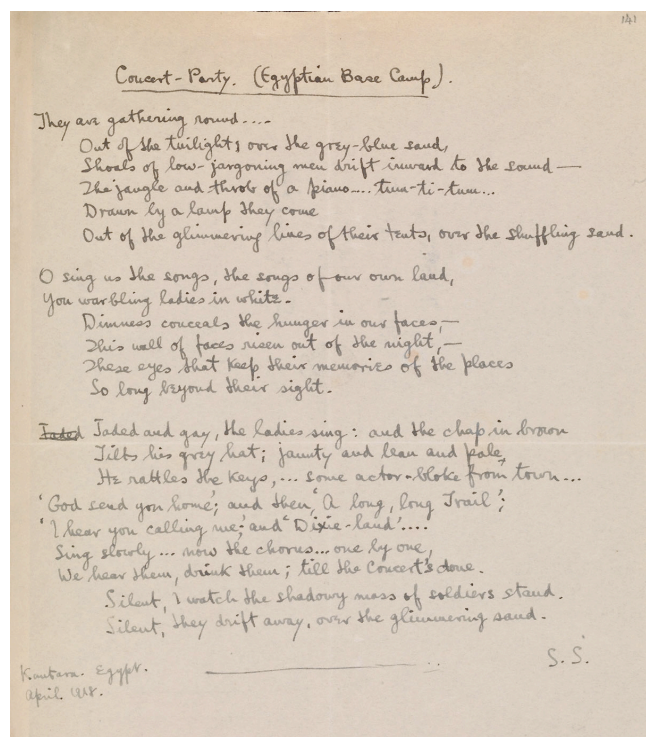
<sup>91</sup> "Better Music for the Front,' *MMR*, 1/11/1917, 241.

<sup>92</sup> Leask, *Lena Ashwell*, 136.

## Materiality 9 The Lena Ashwell Concert Party in Egypt<sup>93</sup>



The concert party which travelled to Egypt under the auspices of Lena Ashwell's organisation Concerts at the Front did not expect to stay more than a few months, but the difficulties of travel and the exigencies of the war meant that they ultimately remained two years, moving on from Egypt to Palestine with General Allenby's army. Lena Ashwell's memoir records that Siegfried Sassoon's *The Concert-Party* was written following his experience of seeing the group perform in the Egyptian desert. She reproduced the text of the poem in the memoir, and below is Sassoon's first draft.<sup>94</sup> Ashwell commented that the 'chap in brown [...] jaunty and lean and pale' was a good description of the party's leader and accompanist, Theodore Flint.



<sup>93</sup> Photograph held in the Wellcome Library RAMC, 1269/6/16

<sup>94</sup> First World War Poetry Digital Archive, accessed 1/5/2013,  
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/collections/item/9562?CISOBX=1&REC1>.

## 5.6 Conclusion

We have noted that music was seen from the very outset of the war as directly relevant to the lives of serving soldiers. There was an initial focus on providing music for recruiting and marching, as well as a recognition that soldiers in training camps could be beneficially kept from boredom, when they were not occupied in training, by providing musical entertainment. This was done at both professional and amateur levels, and by national and local schemes. As the war progressed, and the scale of the conflict as well as the gravity of the situation and the high incidence of casualties became apparent, many saw the need for music, whose many uses we examined in the previous chapter, to step forward and fulfil a role of support and distraction, healing and entertainment, for men serving in the forces overseas. These efforts were seen as part of the national war effort and testimonies from soldiers and observers bear witness to the value of music in wartime. The quality and type of music, whilst for some a key element of the work (in theory at least), seems overall to have been less important than a general recognition that music in all its forms could transcend the individual circumstances, and contribute in a material way to the well-being of soldiers. Nonetheless, the choice of music provided and the debate about soldiers' taste are revealing of attitudes towards class, taste, and education.

As Lancelot wrote in 1917, discussing the constant requests for music from serving men, even music that was used to march the last few miles to camp was of the highest importance:

The music may be ephemeral in nature, and not of the kind to excite the respect of musicians, but often its purpose endows it with a significance deeper than any art can give. The commonest thing can be sanctified by special use. Recently in the early hours of the morning I heard the tramp of hundreds of feet, keeping time to the familiar song, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning.' It was a contingent on its way to the Front. Firmly whistled and sung, the trite tune became instinct with all that makes for courage and the mutability of life.<sup>95</sup>

It may have been unusual that, outside the circumstances of war, a music critic from the more serious sector of the press would have been prepared to credit Ivor Novello's memorable and nostalgic tune – still deservedly popular a century after its composition – with 'all that makes for courage,' despite popular recognition that this was indeed so. However, music of all kinds was, in the eyes of even usually restrictive

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<sup>95</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 25/2/1917, 5.

commentators at home, transformed into a power that was perceived as materially relevant to the military struggle. It is in such instances that we can see a temporary halt, for some, to dominant ideas of taste. In these cases, the ambivalence that Bourdieu saw at the heart of the questions he raises in *Distinction* can be seen to give way to what might be described as a temporary truce. The demands of the war machine and the understanding of the communal effort required to win the war meant that, for some if not all, ideas of 'good' in regard to taste took second place to other considerations.

Late in the war, prompted by the threat of tax which would class printed music as a luxury, many argued that far from being superfluous, music's role with the military was so vital as to support the notion that it was 'helping to win the war':<sup>96</sup>

The world would be a sad place without music, and in time of war its value, always recognised by military leaders, is greater than ever. When a marching regiment flags, what puts fresh life into the jaded men and sets their dragging feet to a brisk measure? A song. When soldiers are dead-tired and weary of all things, what raises their spirit and relieves the tedium of their waiting? A song. What has helped men to meet death heroically on the deck of the sinking ship, and kept women from madness or collapse as they tossed in small boats on the wild waste of the ocean? A song. What cheers the wounded in hospital, the lonely wives and others whose men are away fighting for their country? Music. Always music is the stimulus to heroism, the solace for sorrow. Dare anyone call it a thing the world can do without? Music is helping to win the war.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> An Entertainments Tax which included concerts had been introduced in 1916 and in 1917 this was extended to include complimentary tickets, although, as the *Musical News* pointed out, 'Whether it is worth while to reduce the amusements of the people, for that is what it will come to we fear, for the sake of an amount which will not keep the war going for twenty-four hours, is a matter needing consideration' (*MN*, 12/5/1917). In the summer of 1918 a tax was introduced on all luxury items, and pianos, other instruments, and printed music were all defined as luxuries. There was a great deal of complaint about this, as may be seen from the chairman of the Music Publishers' Association, who wrote to the *DT* stating that 'a tax on printed music would be tantamount to a return to barbarism.' A. E. Bosworth, 'Luxury Tax and Music,' 13/7/1918, 5.

<sup>97</sup> H. Booth, 'Music and Luxury Tax,' *DT*, 20/7/1918, 3.

## Chapter Six: Music in the Service of Charity

Many people debarred by age, fitness or gender from supporting the war effort in a military sense actively sought other ways to contribute. A plethora of initiatives at all levels of society was evidence of the response of the people to the war. DeGroot has painted a vivid picture of the extraordinary range and depth of this reaction from all sections of society, from the partially sighted man who advertised publicly for someone to teach him to knit, to the donation of several cows to a charitable group hoping to establish a hospital in France, along with women volunteering to be milkmaids.<sup>1</sup> Others volunteered their homes to house Belgian refugees, and others donated money: the government received, unsolicited, £25 million during the first ten months of the war.<sup>2</sup> In addition, many charitable organisations were set up, often in quite imaginative ways, as this *Times* advertisement from 1915 aptly illustrates:

Dogs and cats of the Empire! The Kaiser said: 'Germany will fight to the last dog and cat.' Will British dogs and cats give 6d each to provide a YMCA Soldiers Hut in France?<sup>3</sup>

One of the most obvious ways to raise funds for the multiplicity of causes was through organising some form of entertainment. Involvement in music-making for charitable causes thus not only became a significant part of the lives of musicians during the war, but a mutually beneficial as well as potentially fraught connection. The implications and complexities of this involvement are the subject of this chapter.

Two main issues relating to the question of the musician and charity that were prominent in the public discourse during the war are the focus of this chapter. Firstly, I examine the debate around the use of music for charitable aims. This includes much public commentary on the ethical implications of asking musicians who may themselves have been struggling financially, to give their services for free. Several high-profile critics took up the cause of musicians in the invidious position of losing their livelihoods and then being prevailed upon to accept engagements for no fee in order to raise money for others. In turn and perhaps surprisingly, this led to a positive outcome, namely the undoubted fact that despite the problematic nature of

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<sup>1</sup> DeGroot, *Blighly*, 64.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 65.

such requests for performers to give their services, the focus on music as a means to raise funds kept art music centre stage during the war and led to a greater appreciation of its value.

Secondly, I examine musical schemes founded expressly to address the difficulties in which many performers found themselves. Many organisations were formed with the aim of providing for musicians. Rather than handing out charity directly, this was often achieved through creating professional engagements. Such organisations, born of necessity, became one of the main features of musical life during the war. There are various examples but I will concentrate on two principal and representative examples: the Committee for Music in War-Time, and the War Emergency Entertainments, founded by Isidore de Lara. These two organisations were both large scale and received public attention and both had similar aims: to provide gainful employment for musicians and thus help musical life generally during the war. However, the nature of one as a private enterprise (de Lara's) and the other as a semi-official organisation (the Committee for Music in War-Time) means that a comparison between them is valuable.

## 6.1 Music and Charity

Ever since the war began concerts have literally swarmed 'in aid of' this, that, or the other charity or war fund. To this obviously no one can make objection. But has it ever dawned on the great-hearted but sadly neglectful public that those who take part in the concerts likewise hold the (no doubt erroneous) opinion that they, too, have a claim to existence, and are in dire need – a multitude of them, at any rate?<sup>4</sup>

Robin Legge wrote thus of his concerns in June 1915, some ten months after the outbreak of the war. Legge and other music critics, such as Lancelot of the *Referee*, were concerned about musicians being asked to donate their services for charitable fundraisers:

Let concerts be given in aid of pressing necessities. They will relieve distress and provide helpful recreation for the public *but let the artists be paid their usual fees*. Otherwise you are impoverishing a needy community and taking away the earnings of hard workers. It would be better to steal from the pockets of singers than to ask them to give their services to performance which kill their own private concerts and recitals. No one dreams of asking painters and sculptors to give their works for charitable purposes. If it be necessary to call on artists to raise funds to compensate for the waste created by the Germans, let a series of war concerts be properly organised at which the executants shall be paid. Otherwise, every charity concert will be helping the Germans to inflict injury on

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<sup>4</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Musicians Hard Hit,' *DT*, 18/6/1915, 11.

British people.<sup>5</sup>

Lancelot's point about 'impoverishing a needy community' is especially germane. While many were keen to give money to those that they could visibly see were affected by the war, there was a great deal of invisible distress, and in this case that applied to musicians. I noted above that many musicians were reliant on annual summer contracts, which following the declaration of the war were not renewed. In the face of cancellation of festivals and concert series, and the general uncertainty about the place of music, many performing artists were in what Claire Hirshfield has described as 'a profound state of shock and bewilderment.'<sup>6</sup> They remained vulnerable to unemployment or loss of income and were thus in a very difficult position when it came to being asked to work for no fee.

Most of the music journals and music critics in national publications were worried about the dangers behind the apparently positive notion of musicians providing support for charity, but it was a complex issue. Only one month after the outbreak of war the *Monthly Musical Record* reflected strong concern that the combination of cancelled engagements and the natural desire to support charitable endeavours (whether for the troops, the wounded, Belgian refugees or a myriad other good causes) could prove potentially disastrous for musicians:

In the interests of the profession a timely word is much needed to stem a serious inroad into the position of artists and musicians who are at present continually being asked to give their services freely in the cause of the many funds for the prevention of distress. The sympathy of artists responds quickly to touching appeals, but it is hoped that the well-known artists of more comfortable standing will not lend themselves to a course which will quickly have the effect of taking away possible means of livelihood from the more struggling of the profession. Where artists of high standing give their services gratuitously, how will it be possible for the more humble members of the profession to demand fees? What other business or professional men are asked to give away their entire means of livelihood? Surely this is a side of the matter which needs to be kept very prominently before the public.<sup>7</sup>

The *Musical Standard* understood that it was natural enough for charitable enterprises to call on musicians, without thought for those same musicians' plight: they and the audiences they attracted were often 'well-meaning but not deeply thoughtful

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<sup>5</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: War and Art: A Pressing Need,' *Ref*, 23/8/1914, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Claire Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime: 1914-1918,' *Music Review* 53/4, 1992, 291.

Hirshfield has also noted that many theatre musicians were forced, along with other employees, to accept either reduced fees or a share of the takings, and that the *Era* magazine announced a distress fund, since 'unemployment and reduced wages posed so dire a threat to the profession.' *ibid.*, 292.

<sup>7</sup> Editorial: "Kindly-given" Services! *MMR*, 1/10/1914, 269.



patrons.’<sup>8</sup> The issue was difficult to resolve: those who were keen to support deserving causes were in sometimes inadvertent conflict with those who sought to promote the cause of musicians, either through their own professional roles, or because they were themselves musicians whose livelihood was disappearing.

Many observers within the musical world could see that running such concerts without properly recompensing the artists was likely to cause problems in the long term. Professional concert promoters pointed out that it would be harder to find audiences for artists when only concerts for external charitable purposes seemed to attract attention, and were being given in great number.<sup>9</sup> Lancelot of *The Referee* took a strong stand on the issue: ‘No fee, no song’ was his motto, and he declared that he would not write up a notice of any concert for charity which did not either pay the performer or dedicate the proceeds to the benefit of the many struggling musicians.<sup>10</sup> After a year of war, he reminded readers of his principled stand, at the same time as claiming that he (and other critics) had materially contributed to a gradual realisation among charitable organisers that the practice of prevailing upon artists to perform without a fee was unacceptable:

Thanks to plainly expressed opinions in the *Referee* and other journals, the unfairness of asking artists to give their services gratuitously has become recognised. It was, however, only by the insistence of musical critics that the public was made to realise this. Personally I went so far, backed by my editor, as to say I would not help any charity concert scheme unless the performers received some fee. I did this because in several cases social influence was brought to bear on managers, and for obvious reasons artists were afraid to refuse those who habitually offered them engagements. It seems a little thing to ask for a song or a recitation, and no artist would suffer by occasionally consenting; but experience shows that such requests multiply with exceeding rapidity, and it is very difficult to refuse without giving offence, after having consented elsewhere. Artists who can afford to give their services should remember that every time they do so they are impoverishing poorer members of their profession.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Notes and Comments,’ *MS*, 19/9/1914, 205.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Chappell are determined not to lend the hall for charity concerts ... It cannot be too strongly pointed out that these concerts are a mistake and make it additionally hard for those concert-givers who, in face of an inevitable loss, are doing their best to run legitimate concerts and so help to some extent those who have only too generously given their gratuitous services in the past.’ Lancelot, ‘Matters Musical: War and Art: A Pressing Need,’ *Ref*, 23/8/1914, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Lancelot, ‘Matter Musical: Advice to Artists: A Public Responsibility,’ *Ref*, 6/9/1914, 3. Lancelot’s influence as a critic is shown by the fact that his comments were quoted in an editorial in the *Musical Standard*, ‘Notes and Comments,’ *MS*, 19/9/1914, 205.

<sup>11</sup> Lancelot, ‘Matters Musical: Looking Back,’ *Ref*, 25/7/1915, 5. These are issues which one might consider would have been dealt with by the various musicians’ unions that were active at this time, and I noted above that of the commentators seeking to defend musicians’ rights at the October 1914 meetings, some were union spokespeople: see chapter two above. I have not been able to find significant further mention of the role of unions in the music press, however, and I have been informed by the Musicians’ Union that their archives are closed.

The issues were not as clear cut as Lancelot would have his readers believe, however. Rather than a simple case of whether or not one should ask musicians to perform for no fee, there were various other elements about which concern was raised. Firstly, those well-known and more comfortably off musicians who were well able to donate their time would, as we saw in the extract from the *Monthly Musical Record* above, create an expectation amongst concert givers that *all* musicians would always be willing to donate their services, thus disadvantaging those who were in need of earning a living.

Secondly, there was the more general principle that the musician was, under any circumstances, worthy of his hire: 'What other business or professional men are asked to give away their entire means of livelihood?'<sup>12</sup> This of course was a question not confined to war-time, and the war-time debate on the justice of effectively asking professional musicians to work for nothing was an on-going issue (the *Musical News* in 1917 recalled that an article bemoaning the habit of asking performers to give their services had been published in 1904), merely given particular life and urgency in war-time due to the lack of normal employment which perhaps masked the problem somewhat.<sup>13</sup>

Thirdly, the war had made many musicians themselves a needy cause, and in the second part of this chapter I will examine some examples of the initiatives established to address such need. Again, the *Monthly Musical Record* was aware of the difficulties. Noting that musical performers rather than teachers were the main sufferers in the changes in the musical life of the country, it hoped that the situation would be relieved if the charitable requests were to cease, and the performers to be properly paid:

It is chiefly the concert-artists and singers who have suffered. Much of this might have been, and can still be, avoided by effective co-operation in order to take a stern stand against the pushing of charitable requests so far that they become a serious menace to the welfare of the profession.<sup>14</sup>

The interface between musicians and charitable requirements was not always clear-

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<sup>12</sup> 'Editorial: "Kindly-given" Services!' *MMR*, 1/10/1914, 269.

<sup>13</sup> 'Editorial: The Sacred Cause of Charity,' *MN*, 16/6/1917, 373. The topic was still a matter for debate in 2012, where professional musicians were asked to donate their services to the Olympic celebrations in London: see for example the Musicians Union website, accessed 6/8/2012, <http://www.musiciansunion.org.uk/news-events/2012/06/27/mu-urging-musicians-not-to-work-for-free-at-olympics/>.

<sup>14</sup> 'Editorial: Music and the War,' *MMR*, 1/1/1915, 1.

cut. Musicians could be paid to appear at concerts in aid of various charities; they could receive paid engagements directly designed to support worthwhile causes (such as performances in hospitals and training camps) or receive expenses for such employment: the Lena Ashwell 'Concerts at the Front' scheme for example); they could donate their own services, or they could be the recipients of charity themselves. This complex issue raised various questions and it means that even those like Lancelot of the *Referee* who publicly stated that they would not support or give reviews of concerts or any engagement where the artist was not paid sometimes found the lines blurred, as when Lancelot received an approach from Edwin Evans.

Evans, at this time music critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, wrote to ask Lancelot to advertise for volunteers for a scheme of entertainments for Belgian refugees at an official Refugee Camp in Earl's Court.<sup>15</sup> Evans hoped to give a programme which included 'so-called "speciality" turns,' and enquired if Lancelot had any contact in 'Variety.' He even expressed the desire for film screenings for the refugees, but was unable to find a film company to help. There were two key elements to Evans's approach.

Firstly, he made a clear distinction between 'variety' and concert-music, stating, 'Of course I do not intend to mix the two elements.' At this relatively early stage of the war, for Evans music was separated into distinct camps: 'mixed' concerts were an unwelcome idea. We will examine further in the concluding chapter that sometimes clear-cut pre-war distinctions were blurred during the unusual conditions of wartime, but this was not always the case. Evans certainly wished to keep the art music and variety turns separate, but valued them both for their roles in lifting the spirits of people in very difficult circumstances. For our present purposes, we will see below that Isidore de Lara was also interested in providing 'entertainment' in a broad sense, but did not share Evans's view of the necessity of a clear-cut distinction between genres.

The second and most important element of Evans's approach related to the question

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<sup>15</sup> Evans wrote to the music critic as Francis Gilbert Webb, his real name. I will refer to Webb by his pseudonym of Lancelot, as this is how Webb generally appears both in the press of the time and in these pages. Edwin Evans to F. W. Webb, 1/3/1915, CSUN ML90.F73 1769 California State University Northridge. An interesting summary of the types of difficulty faced in housing and finding employment for refugees, as well as the various centres in which they were temporarily housed, may be found in the 'Women at Work Collection' of the Imperial War Museum, in Mrs A. M. Mercer's 'Report of the War Refugees Committee,' IWM BEL 2 4/4.

of musicians giving their services. He enclosed a printed paragraph with his letter to Lancelot, on which he hoped an appeal might be based, to appear in *The Referee*. Pleading the cause of the refugees who needed distraction whilst waiting in the clearing house of the Earls' Court site, Evans found himself in the difficult position of arguing that the cause was so worthy that musicians *should* give their services, though stating that in general he was adamant that musicians should do no such thing:

Some of the committees that are interesting themselves in the lot of the musician in war time have taken a very firm stand, on the principle that members of the profession that has done so much for charity in normal times are not to be asked to give their services for charitable purposes under present conditions. That is a principle I fully endorse. In fact, I have more than once refused to associate myself with concerts organised to raise money for a worthy purpose at which it was not proposed that artists should be paid. But in this case there is obviously no possibility of receipts, and cases of material distress among the refugees are still so numerous and so painful that it is impossible to suggest diverting to purposes of entertainment any portion of the money received for their relief. I mention this to avoid misunderstanding, as one or two musicians who were otherwise willing have been deterred from helping me by the attitude of the committees.<sup>16</sup>

Evans may or may not have seen the illogicality of his position: his own understanding of the needs of the refugee cause meant that in this case he thought the principle should be waived – but no doubt others organising events for worthy causes thought the same. This example serves to demonstrate that many musicians will have had difficulty in deciding whether or not to assist with requests for charitable help. More than this, however, the case of the refugee concerts may stand as exemplar for the many ways in which it was natural for musicians to realise that their services could very materially alleviate distress. Evans's approach was clearly effective even to Lancelot, apparently convinced of his 'no fee, no song' motto: the following comments appeared in Lancelot's weekly remarks on music a few days after Evans's approach:

The need of entertainments in social welfare has probably never been raised as it is at the present moment, and it is being met with a notable unselfishness and astonishing responsiveness [...] the War Refugees Camp in Earl's Court [...] is used as a kind of clearing-house for thousands of refugees who remain here until either work or hospitality has been found for them. It is inevitably a trying experience, and Mr. Edwin Evans appeals to artists to assist him to continue his greatly appreciated entertainments for the benefit of these unfortunate people. Of course there is no possibility of paying fees, but any artists who will give their services will be warmly welcomed.<sup>17</sup>

The question of whether or not musicians should be paid for their services during the

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<sup>16</sup> Edwin Evans to F. W. Webb, 1/3/1915, CSUN ML90.F73 1769.

<sup>17</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Referee*, 7/3/1915, 5.

war was more or less resolved in favour of musicians, although not consistently.<sup>18</sup> Concert-givers gained more understanding, through the efforts of the music press and others, that musicians themselves might well be in difficult financial straits. Although in late 1916 Lancelot was still commenting on the practice of asking musicians to perform *gratis*, the number of mentions had reduced: from 1917 onwards the topic rarely arises. However, there was always a variety of responses to the situation, and of course many artists who had been financially successful before the war and were very well settled, such as Clara Butt, were easily able to give their services without fee.

Butt and her husband, only recently returned from a world tour, gave a patriotic concert in October 1914 at the Albert Hall, all proceeds going to charity.<sup>19</sup> This was but the first of an extraordinary record of fund raising. In April 1918 Robin Legge in the *Daily Telegraph* claimed that her wartime charitable fund-raising had reached the astonishing total of £42,000. Butt's ability to forgo any fee for herself did not make her insensitive to the needs of other musicians: quite the reverse. Instead, she made sure that she created employment opportunities and always paid anyone involved in her fund-raising endeavours proper fees. Her scheme for artists less fortunate than herself will be examined briefly below in section 6.2.

Before any such scheme specifically to aid struggling musicians was put into practice, however, musical commentators and active musicians considered various possibilities for assisting those in difficulty, or for protecting the interests of the musical profession. For example, the idea that executive musicians might consider performing on somewhat reduced terms was raised by Landon Ronald. He wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* within two weeks of the war's beginning, mentioning both his concern that concerts were cancelled without thought or offer at negotiated fees, as well as the issue of charitable concerts where performers were not paid. Noting that theatres and music-halls had made arrangements to negotiate practical solutions in order to keep productions running, such as temporarily reduced fees, he wondered why similar arrangement had not been put in place for concert music:

I have [...] waited in vain for someone to suggest a meeting between the representative concert managers of England and the artists, instrumentalists, vocalists, and orchestral

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<sup>18</sup> The *Musical News* editorial was still expressing concern over the issue in June 1917. 'Editorial: The Sacred Cause of Charity,' *MN*, 16/6/1917, 373.

<sup>19</sup> 'Patriotic Concert at Albert Hall: Clara Butt's Return,' *DT*, 12/10/1914, 6.

players – whose sole means of livelihood is the profession they follow. [...] At a time of war musicians, of course, must throw in their lot with others, and bear any privations and sufferings patiently and bravely [...] But I do not think it right or just that those who are responsible for arranging festivals, operatic tours, and concerts should practically at one blow deprive artists of their sole means of livelihood, without at least seeing there is no middle course to pursue, such as offering reduced fees, or what is known as ‘sharing terms.’ [...] It is my conviction that there is not an artist in the profession who would not meet the concert manager over the question of fees, and there is not a member of the musical public who would not support fine concerts, if it be properly brought home to him that by doing so he is saving thousands from starvation.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst Ronald was suggesting that financial discussions take place to avoid throwing musicians into dependence on charity, others took a different route to helping those in this plight, and established organisations which we will examine below.

## 6.2 Wartime Musical Schemes

The sudden difficulties in which many musicians found themselves through the initial rupture in the normal fabric of musical life was the catalyst for a whole range of initiatives. The war thus gave birth to some completely new, if temporary, musical entities. These schemes were designed to assist musicians in remaining in gainful employment, as well as keeping art music centre stage and a valued part of cultural life. They ranged from the small to the large, and from the local to the national. Claire Hirshfield has examined several of these schemes in her valuable study.<sup>21</sup> I will focus primarily on two representative schemes, of contrasting nature, which were the most widely commented on in the press, and which featured nationally known musicians performing, organising or both. Founded in response to the distress in which many artists found themselves, both originated in the early days of the war, and both created such well-established and successful networks that they had hopes for a prolongation after the war. The two schemes were distinctly different in character. It is essential to note, however, that these schemes were a unique feature of musical life, whether small or large, and that this was directly attributable to the conditions of wartime. We saw above that Landon Ronald had hoped that those in managerial roles might collaborate to reduce costs, and ensure that no one was thrown out of work, but the projects I examine in this chapter were a new idea, an alternative to suggestions such as accepting reduced fees, for example.

The War Emergency Entertainments founded by Isidore de Lara, and the Music in

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<sup>20</sup> ‘The War and Music: Call to Concert Managers,’ *DT*, 19/8/1914, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Claire Hirshfield, ‘Musical Performance in Wartime: 1914-1918,’ *Music Review* 53/4, 1992, 291-304.

War-Time Committee, which I examine below, were high profile schemes, but there were a myriad smaller schemes too. Many of these received comment in the press and one such was the Independent Music Club:

The Independent Music Club, a new organisation formed shortly before the world-war began, will undertake the organising of concerts in aid of musicians adversely affected by the war, and the dispensing of the fund which it is to be hoped will result. As far as can be ascertained, no organised effort has as yet been started to relieve the unavoidable distress amongst musicians, and the Independent Music Club appeals confidently to the music-lovers of the metropolis for a fund to help primarily their own members and then the profession at large [...] Artists in need should not hesitate to make known in confidence their difficulties.<sup>22</sup>

The work of this club continued throughout the war, stressing the importance of providing relief by giving professional engagements, which in turn were also used in entertaining soldiers in camps:

Much undoubted distress is caused frequently amongst the professional classes by war conditions, and the appeal of the [...] Independent Music Club [...] is therefore timely. 'Paid work,' it says, 'is the only solution,' and recognising this they have sent out *paid* concert parties to camp and hospital ever since the war began.<sup>23</sup>

The irony of the situation was that, whilst priding itself on not giving charity to musicians, and believing that to give paid work was the answer, the club nonetheless needed finances to do this. When the concerts it gave were not of the paying kind, namely all of those given in camps and hospitals, then it still depended on donations for its continued existence, as is shown in this 1915 extract from the *Referee*:

The demands on one's purse just now are well-nigh endless and the objects are so worthy many good people must wish more ardently than at any period of their lives that they were wealthy. Good music well rendered has been found of enormous help and comfort to thousands who are suffering in hospitals and nursing homes, but it must be given by sympathetic and competent artists. This is just the class that has been hit most heavily by the war, and so there must be funds for paying their expenses. The Independent Music Club is daily receiving application for its artists, but its response is limited by its funds. A good entertainment costs about £5, and as there is no possibility of profits, money is needed to carry on this good work. Donations will be gratefully acknowledged.<sup>24</sup>

To avoid giving charity to musicians, the club was dependent on soliciting charity

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<sup>22</sup> 'Notes,' *MS*, 10/10/1914, 258. The Club had announced its formation in July 1914, and was motivated by the need for fair conditions for musicians: 'The Independent Music Club: An organisation under the above title has been formed with the following objects: The promotion and especially the protection of the best interests of musical artists and composers; The introduction of creative and executive artists to each other with a view to mutual benefit; The fostering of breadth of view and knowledge of public requirements with regard to music; and To establish adequate remuneration for all engagements coming to artists through the Club.' 'The Independent Music Club,' *MT*, 1/7/1914, 470.

<sup>23</sup> 'Allotria,' *MMR*, 1/8/1916, 225, emphasis original.

<sup>24</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 4/7/1915, 5.

itself – and it did so via the pages of musical journals and in the national press under the banner of music critics.

Like the Independent Music Club, Clara Butt was concerned to arrange paid engagements for musicians. She did not content herself with fundraising for national charities but also instituted a scheme whereby she engaged groups of artists at a decent wage who then toured the country visiting towns and also hospitals and camps. This raised funds for good causes as well as providing both much needed entertainment for audiences and paid employment for those she engaged. Her biographer Winifred Ponder described the work:

She organized a series of concerts throughout the United Kingdom, at hospitals, workhouses, asylums, homes for incurables, and other such institutions, paying the artists engaged for the purpose not less than ten guineas a week and expenses. They usually travelled in parties of five, and altogether some two thousand engagements were provided that first winter. [...] In addition to the concerts for the inmates of institutions, concert-parties of distressed artists also toured the smaller towns of England and Scotland – many of them out-of-the-way places that seldom or never had an opportunity of hearing good music – the proceeds being devoted to the Red Cross Funds. These concerts proved immensely successful as competition was keen between the various towns to swell their respective funds and support of the concerts was consequently most generous. Many leading artists accepted engagements on these tours and the scheme was continued throughout the War period with extraordinary success.<sup>25</sup>

Butt's charitable work is representative of the interconnected nature of charitable work and schemes to provide musicians with such work, in that it assisted towns to donate to their own charities, it provided musicians with paid work, and her artists visited places where music was very welcome.<sup>26</sup> For the rest of this chapter, I concentrate on two schemes which were well publicised, well received, effective in their work, and yet utterly different in character, examining first the scheme organised by composer Isidore de Lara.

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<sup>25</sup> Winifred Ponder, *Clara Butt: Her Life Story* (London: Harrap, 1928), 174-5.

<sup>26</sup> There were other schemes put in place to alleviate the needs of those involved in the music business in its widest sense which space does not permit an examination of here: the ever practical Percy Scholes, at the *Music Student*, created a scheme to assist many of those working in music but not in the public eye. The *Music Student* showed itself, in its wartime coverage and from its beginning, to be a very practical journal. During the war years it was very aware of the real implications of the war for music and the attendant business activities dependent on music, that is of the interconnected nature of the various branches of commerce with the life of musicians. Percy Scholes was, as founder and editor of a small journal, naturally concerned about the potential impact of the war upon his staff. Immediately upon the outbreak of war, he established under the auspices of the journal a music-publishing arm, the Patriotic Publishing Company. Choosing to sell patriotic music was, he hoped, a wise business decision that would generate profits. In turn, the profits from the enterprise were designed to ensure that in the times of 'economic strain' caused by the war, the journal would not have to dismiss any of its clerical staff. In this venture they were so initially successful that they sold more than 60,000 copies of their first publication, *National Anthems of the Allies*, within three weeks. Percy Scholes, 'War Music,' *MStud*, 1/10/1914, 44. See also Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime.'



### 6.2.1 Isidore de Lara and the War Emergency Entertainments

When Isidore de Lara's name began appearing regularly in the music and national press shortly after the outbreak of war, those in musical circles would have known him from his reputation as an operatic composer, as well as, in the latter two decades of the nineteenth century, as a singer and composer of ballads and drawing-room songs. De Lara's great passion for the lyric stage had led him to move to France in 1893, where he had considerable success as an operatic composer in continental Europe.<sup>27</sup> This career had been reported on in the British press, though not with the same degree of serious acceptance that other British composers received when their operas or other works were performed in Germany, France, Italy and elsewhere. De Lara's work had been relatively unknown but is now receiving increasing scholarly attention. Claire Hirshfield's article 'Musical Performance in Wartime' was an early work to devote serious critical attention to his wartime work; Steven Martin's doctoral work as well as Rodmell's monograph on opera in Britain are welcome considerations of his operatic work.<sup>28</sup>

Although in 1899, de Lara's most successful opera *Messaline* had been given three times in the Covent Garden season, as well as at La Scala under Toscanini and at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, de Lara was largely considered to be a composer of works whose chief interest lay in their acceptance on foreign opera stages. His return to London a few days before the declaration of war was, as he himself explained, prompted by a desire to be of service in some capacity.<sup>29</sup> Born in 1858 and fifty-six years of age when war broke out, his first thought had been to offer himself to the War Office as an interpreter. This was a rôle for which he may well have been

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<sup>27</sup> De Lara's first professional engagement in Britain following a period of study at the Conservatorio in Milan, where he had won the Gran Premio for composition, was as Professor of Singing at the Guildhall School of Music. He had also had an early cantata performed in dramatic form at Covent Garden in 1892 (*The Light of Asia*) and found acceptance as a composer of serious opera hard to find in Britain, following a great success as a drawing-room performer, society favourite, and composer of such light and immensely successful songs as *The Garden of Sleep*: the music critic John F Runciman, in a review of de Lara's opera *Moïna* at its première in Monte Carlo, recalled that 'when de Lara wrote "Amy Robsart" he had to pay the price of having written that "Garden of Sleep."' J. F. Runciman, 'Mr de Lara's "Moïna" at Monte Carlo,' *Saturday Review*, 20/3/1897, 288.

<sup>28</sup> Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime,' particularly 293-4; Martin, *British 'Operatic Machine'*; Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles*. For further information on de Lara's wartime work, see Jane Angell, 'A Matter of National Importance: Isidore de Lara and the War Emergency Entertainments,' paper given at the 2012 conference of the North American British Music Studies Association, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

<sup>29</sup> De Lara, *Many Tales*, 244ff.

peculiarly fitted, experienced as he was in handling competing personal interests from his years overseeing his own productions in opera houses all over Europe, as well as his fluency in French.<sup>30</sup> At this early stage of the war, however, officialdom was still suspicious of the unusual, and the arts generally, as we saw in the difficulty that Ashwell and others had in gaining acceptance for music in military life. De Lara's offer was turned down.

De Lara found himself therefore actively looking for a constructive contribution to the war effort. Lady Helmsley, a society friend, observed the success of a fund-raising concert that de Lara had helped with in the very early days of the war and suggested that they create an organisation together to help 'distressed artists.'<sup>31</sup> He was thus provided with a project into which he could put his energies and talents, as well as making the most of his extensive social contacts.

The object of de Lara's scheme was modest in its initial intentions, as he recalled in his memoir:

to create opportunities of small engagements for members of the musical, dramatic, and variety professions, to enable those artists who objected to charity to earn a little money.<sup>32</sup>

These small engagements were in the first weeks sporadically organised, sometimes in private houses, sometimes at Claridge's Hotel, where de Lara was based and where the management kindly gave him a suite of rooms as office space for his scheme free of charge for the duration of the war.<sup>33</sup> An early first foray into this sort of entrepreneurship saw him arrive at a private patron's house accompanied by a troupe of performers which he described as:

Probably the most heterogeneous company of artists that had ever taken part in a private house concert. There were two Prima Donnas from the Flemish Opera House in Antwerp, the professor of violoncello at the Conservatoire at Liège, an Italian bass, a Roumanian tenor, the leading baritone from the opera in Brussels, a Belgian conductor, a comic lady at the piano, a lady cornet payer highly popular before the war at seaside resorts, a Monegasque conjurer, a French diseuse, a banjo virtuoso, two violinists, and a dozen British vocalists of the fair sex.<sup>34</sup>

This type of unusual private arrangement gave way to a regular scheme of concerts,

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<sup>30</sup> Part of de Lara's schooldays were spent in Boulogne, and he had lived in France for many years by 1914.

<sup>31</sup> De Lara, *Many Tales*, 248.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, 251.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 252.

managed by de Lara himself and a committee, the two most prominent members of which (often themselves named in the press when de Lara's scheme was noticed) were Muriel, Viscountess Helmsley, and Mr. Gordon Selfridge. The scheme was being regularly remarked upon in the press by October 1914, and de Lara commended for his 'War Emergency Entertainments.' By February 1915, the *Monthly Musical Record* was noting 'the admirable work being accomplished by the War Emergency Entertainments of Mr. Isidore de Lara. How great has been the success of the scheme is attested by the fact that the guarantee fund remains intact after two months' work, in which time over 200 artists have received engagements.'<sup>35</sup>

A weekly routine of entertainments was soon established, which included a Sunday 'Hour of Music' at Claridge's, almost a social event rather than a musical one. The entertainments took the form of a number of different types of engagement, and the plan for the week soon assumed a regular place in the concert calendar. There was usually a Tea Matinée at one of the London hotels, and Legge noted in 1915, 'A lady said in my hearing the other day that she went to a number of the War Emergency Concerts because for 5s one had a free 2s 6d tea! A real patron of art!'<sup>36</sup> In 1915 de Lara introduced another type of concert called 'Laughter and Song,' and by this stage his organisation, called the War Emergency Entertainments, was giving four concerts each week.

When Mr. de Lara first announced a series of concerts, in which song was to be tempered with laughter, many people thought that the enterprise would be short-lived, owing to a scarcity of humorists. The last few weeks, however, have proved that there is plenty of available talent, and the 'Hours of Laughter and Song' have been as popular as any other series in the widely varied War Emergency Concerts. There was merriment enough and to spare in the programme [and] amazing conjuring tricks.<sup>37</sup>

These types of concert appealed to a wide audience and in particular a society audience. De Lara himself insisted that 'Entertainments' was the correct term, and this broad appeal was deliberate. It was a feature of the work appreciated by commentators:

A commendable feature of the War Emergency Entertainments is that they have broken through conventional practice. A dancer is frequently introduced into a concert. A series of Laughter and Song entertainments was a distinctly happy idea, and a decided impetus has been given to British chamber music by the weekly British concerts at Steinway Hall.

<sup>35</sup> 'In the Concert Room,' *MMR*, 1/2/1915, 44.

<sup>36</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: War and Music,' *DT*, 16/1/1915, 6.

<sup>37</sup> 'Musical Notes: War Emergency Concerts,' *DT*, 10/4/1915, 6.

Finally, the speeches delivered by Mr de Lara and others on the neglect of native art have undoubtedly drawn attention to this grievance and made many people think. This breaking down of the solemnity of the concert room is likely to bear good fruit. In the future concert givers will do well to provide greater variety.<sup>38</sup>

Thomas Beecham later described de Lara's work over several pages of his memoir *A Mingled Chime*.<sup>39</sup> One aspect of the scheme that he felt was particularly significant was that the figure of de Lara himself, had an appeal to society ladies, due to his past as a popular drawing-room singer, his close friendships with European royalty, and as writer of the enormously popular *Garden of Sleep*, a highly sentimental but very successful song which still drew large audiences when de Lara performed it during the war. He thus attracted an entirely new audience for serious music, and for British music in particular. According to Beecham, de Lara was:

the medium by which a large mass of British compositions was introduced to a section of society which so far had been unaware of its existence. For the audiences were largely composed of women of fashion and of those who liked to be seen in their proximity, all of them a little curious to inspect at close quarters a man who had become a shadowy figure of romance.<sup>40</sup>

If de Lara himself was in many cases the appeal to his audience, he was uncompromising in a strand of his work which developed as the war went on, and that was his realisation that his concerts, as well as providing paid engagements for artists (every single professional performer in his concerts was guaranteed £1 per performance as a minimum, whatever the audience size) could be used to help the cause of British music.

We saw earlier that de Lara felt strongly about the influence of German 'frightfulness,' in his article in the *Fortnightly Review* in May 1915, 'English Music and German Masters;' but this article also promoted the idea of his British music concerts, as an antidote to past domination by the Austro-German tradition:

It occurred to me that I could also devote some of the concerts to the cause of British music, and for many weeks my Thursday evening programmes have been entirely dedicated to the works of British composers. The result has been in every way satisfactory. The concerts have brought me into contact with many young musicians of

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<sup>38</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Looking Back,' *Ref*, 25/7/1915, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Beecham, *Mingled Chime*, 192-195.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, 193. According to the biographer of the Grimaldi family, de Lara was implicated in the break up of the marriage of Princess Alice of Monaco to Prince Albert. Following her separation, she lived at Claridge's, as did de Lara for some time, before moving to Paris. Anne Edwards, *The Grimaldis of Monaco* (New York: William Morrow 1992), 167-8 and 175-6. If the rumours of such a relationship were common talk at the time of de Lara's return to London, this might in turn have contributed to Beecham's description of de Lara as a 'shadowy figure of romance.'

undoubted talent and brilliant promise. Their music has moreover proven to me that if they could only learn to emancipate themselves from the influence of the German masters and their English disciples, they would translate into music the true spirit of their fellow countrymen.<sup>41</sup>

De Lara urged British composers not only to lay to one side all foreign models, but to compose with lack of emotional constraint, in a manner designed not to appeal to those he called 'aesthetic snobs.'<sup>42</sup> In the service of British music, then, he devoted one of his weekly concerts exclusively to British music, the Thursday concerts at Steinway Hall. The hall was lent to him free on these occasions and Steinway's generosity in support of British music may well have been a conscious decision to prove the company's impeccable pro-British credentials, after its pianos had been rejected, early in the war, by the Guildhall School of Music.<sup>43</sup>

Although Beecham himself demonstrated a great deal of support for de Lara, and conducted a performance of one of his later operas, *Nail*, in 1919, an early Beecham biographer dismissed the British element of de Lara's enterprise as a chauvinistic failure:

During the early war years, the public suffered – or were invited to suffer – a great deal in the cause of chauvinism. A body called the War Emergency Entertainments Committee boasted of producing 200 new British compositions at 200 new concerts.<sup>44</sup>

This is significant for its dismissal of the enterprise as one to be endured rather than enjoyed, without any apparent merit. An examination of the evidence of the public comment on de Lara's scheme at the time proves that the reception of his scheme, and the recognition he received at the time, were quite different.

The works presented were a mixture of old and new, established composers and untried works. It would be unrealistic to assume that every new piece presented at

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<sup>41</sup> Isidore de Lara, 'English Music and German Masters,' *FR*, 1/5/1915, 847.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> A letter of 24/9/1914 to James Bell for the Guildhall School of Music read: 'Dear Sir, In reply to your letter of the 22nd inst. we wish to call your very earnest attention to the fact that Steinway and Sons is an American corporation, owned by American Capital (almost exclusively held by members of the Steinway family and their employees). Your letter implies that we are a German firm and we must take exception to its tenor. Over two thirds of our production is made and marketed in America. ... [A]ll profits [are] sent to New York. ... We do not bring these facts forward in order to obtain a place for our pianos at the Guildhall School of Music and are quite content to abide by the present decision of the Musical Committee, but we resent very strongly the imputation that we are a German firm, and request you to place this letter before the Musical Committee at its next meeting, in order to present the actual facts of the case to that body of influential gentlemen.' LMA, COL/CC/MDC/02/019. De Lara refers to the free use of Steinway Hall in his memoir: De Lara, *Many Tales*, 257.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Reid, *Thomas Beecham: An Independent Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1961), 158.

one of de Lara's concerts was either popular or likely to continue to be performed: but de Lara's point was that not only did composers need exposure, but the public needed to become accustomed to different idioms. To this end, with the financial support of such philanthropists as W. W. Cobbett (long standing patron of chamber music who had encouraged its composition since the early part of the century) and Sir Francis Trippell, various sums were offered as prize money for new chamber works. Winners of these sums include Eugene Goossens in March 1915, Arthur Bliss in April 1915, Frank Bridge in July 1915, Joseph Holbrooke in February 1916, and many more.

A noteworthy feature of many of de Lara's concerts under this scheme was the address to the audience. We noted briefly above that certain promoters of native music followed de Lara's lead and took up the custom of giving speeches as part of a concert. For de Lara, however, the address to the audience was an invaluable part of the whole. They covered a variety of topics and were given by well-known figures as well as de Lara himself. These talks often received mention in the press:

I was present at a concert a few days ago – one of the multitude of War Emergency Concerts – when, in a characteristic speech, Mr. Isidore de Lara, the prime mover in the concern, pitched into the audience with terrific but wholly deserved vehemence for their neglect of their obvious duty to help the helpless, and to do what in them lay to assist in the hoped-for development of the latent musical talent of this country. What the immediate result of this and many similar speeches will be one cannot say, but this much is clear to me after a lengthy quarter of a century and more of concert-going – that the public do require to be aroused from their gigantic sloth and lethargy. Not a murmur was heard in the concert-room I refer to, which, it seems to me, shows that Mr. de Lara's words went home, and touched an uneasy conscience!<sup>45</sup>

Elsewhere de Lara is described as having 'addressed the audience with his customary vigour'.<sup>46</sup> Lancelot of the *Referee* described a talk by Edwin Evans, comparing 'French, Russian and English points of view of the functions of music,' in August 1915, as 'the now expected address'<sup>47</sup> and in the same month Lancelot also welcomed a talk thus:

The address was delivered by Mr H. B. Dicken, who took for his subject national stress and musical awakening, and treated it in a cheery and instructive manner.<sup>48</sup>

Often the content of the address was given more attention than the music for the

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<sup>45</sup> Robin Legge, 'British Music: Artists and the Public,' *DT*, 6/2/1915, 6.

<sup>46</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Steinway Hall,' 4/11/1916, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 22/8/1915, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 29/8/1915, 5.

concert, as was the case in September 1915, when scant attention was paid to the music played, but a talk on 'the boycotting of British composers' was described as enlivening, and recounted in detail.<sup>49</sup> It can thus be seen that the varied types of concert that de Lara promoted received a great deal of attention in the press, and that coverage was usually positive.

Even where there was an implication that in some way the War Emergency Entertainments had fallen short, lacking in some way or disappointing in another, most such comments were only oblique, commentators seeming to make every effort to promote the series. For example, each time de Lara's scheme reached a milestone – and publicity was given to every one, be it the one hundredth or the eight hundredth concert – the success was given in numerical terms, which in the case of the *Referee* in 1916, meant covering up potential criticism:

The all-British concert at Steinway Hall on Thursday was the 400th performance given by the War Emergency Entertainments. It appears that 500 artists have been engaged for these performances, to whom has been distributed over £3000 in fees. Whatever may be said about the administration of the executive and whatever disappointments may have been experienced, the above figures entitled the scheme to respect and its promoters to esteem.<sup>50</sup>

This qualified approval from the *Referee* is in contrast to a strongly worded criticism that de Lara received in the pages of the *Musical News* in 1917, which held that, despite good intentions, he was unfairly blaming audiences for not responding to British music when in fact the compositions themselves were at fault:

It is a fact to be deeply regretted, but not to be ignored by those who would ameliorate the situation, that much, very much, of the musical productions of our people which secures an audience is not worth a hearing. Mr de Lara, for whose patriotic intentions we have the highest admiration, has laboured hard in the past months to popularise the work of British composers. But he has failed to discriminate. In seeking to encourage a taste for British compositions, he has found everything good that bore the label of this country. Much of it, unfortunately, is quite unworthy to be regarded as a standard of art. Elaborately dressed and decorated in many cases, it aspires to be accepted as the beautiful creation of genius. Stripped of its trappings it is found to be a soulless, lifeless, meaningless dummy.<sup>51</sup>

These comments are almost certainly fair in their assessment of the patchy quality of some of the music played, although it is not clear if de Lara was knowingly putting on music he considered second-rate in a wish to be as fair and encouraging to composers

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<sup>49</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 12/9/1915, 5.

<sup>50</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 2/4/1916, 8.

<sup>51</sup> W. H. Welsh, 'Musical Communion,' *MN*, 19/5/1917, 304.

as possible, or if he was incapable of accurate assessment. In any case, opinions of the worth of music are subject to personal taste and this anonymous critic's comments were not commonly expressed. Rather that was a general recognition of the sterling effort de Lara was making on behalf of British music. By the end of the war, de Lara's scheme had given over 1300 concerts, an extraordinary record, and it was his proud boast that the organisation had not had to break into its guarantee fund, although it seems likely (and de Lara himself suspected as much, as noted in his memoir) that many of his supporters and some of his committee donated money themselves to keep the scheme going.<sup>52</sup> The scheme's high public profile, different types of appeal, and sheer audacity of scale meant that it was an exceptionally successful example of a scheme designed to benefit many musicians during the war, as well as improving the prospects for British composers generally.

Robin Legge summed up in 1918 the beginning of the War Emergency Entertainments scheme, and paid credit to its achievements, both in recognising the worth of British composers and in providing an unsurpassed record of entertainment in wartime:

When in the early days of the war, Mr Isidore De Lara [...] established the War Emergency Entertainments, even he can hardly have dared to imagine that the day would come when the London public would be invited to attend the 1000th [*vic*] concert [...] they are now in sight of that significant milestone in the history of the movement which, at the outset, may well have seemed beset with difficulties.

The objects aimed at were threefold: to give free concerts to wounded soldiers in hospital; to provide engagements for artists hard-hit by the war, and to foster British music. As events have shown, the latter object became in due course a very important feature in the manifold activities embarked upon by the promoters of the War Emergency Entertainments, and it is not too much to say that in the last few critical years the cause of native music has known no more untiring and persistent champion than Mr de Lara. [He] set about practising as well as preaching, and the result has been a quite remarkable record of activities in the production and performance of native works [...]

In the three and a half years' record of steady work accomplished by the war emergency entertainments lies eloquent proof of what can be achieved [...] Up to now about 160 programmes dedicated to native music have been carried through. But that statement only conveys a partial idea of what it has been possible to achieve through the movement set on foot in November, 1914. For, as has been said, the 1000th concert in connection with the war emergency scheme will soon be an accomplished fact, and it is interesting to be reminded that, of the various entertainments promoted, some 370 have been given in hospitals (for our wounded Tommies) and in YMCA huts. And what all these activities have meant to many an artist seriously affected by the war may be faintly realised when it is mentioned that since the scheme was initiated fees have been paid to the extent of not

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<sup>52</sup> De Lara, *Many Tales*, 250: 'Mrs Walter Jones arranged all the hospital concerts ... When our bank balance was sometimes low, she invariably found a "generous subscriber" to the fund. And I always had a vague ideas that the "generous subscriber" was Mrs Walter Jones.'



less than £8500 in addition to which amount a number of artists have been benefited by means of private engagements obtained for them to the same channel. Surely it is the tale of which those who have helped to make it possible had good reason to feel proud.<sup>53</sup>

In 1919, a dinner was given in de Lara's honour, in recognition of the work he had done for British music during the war years. Stanford and Beecham were present among others.<sup>54</sup> The absence of any mention of this high-profile public recognition from most of the obituaries written after de Lara's death in 1935 shows a short memory amongst commentators. It may be taken as evidence that, however grateful people were to de Lara during the war, earlier judgments of his worth soon reasserted themselves. He was better-known as a composer not of the first-rank, composing in an idiom out of fashion with many, and he was also a figure well outside the establishment (a position no doubt exacerbated by anti-Semitic attitudes).<sup>55</sup> In wartime it was possible to see a partial dissolution of boundaries between genres, people and ideas, an idea we will return to in the conclusion; but this softening did not in this case last beyond the war's end.<sup>56</sup>

## 6.2.2 The Music in War-Time Committee

Although great things were promised for the safeguarding of the interests of British music in the early days of the war,<sup>57</sup> it was not from the somewhat xenophobic rhetoric and grand promises of co-operation that formal organisation came, but from an initially private initiative. As Hirshfield has put it, 'traditional audiences were dwindling in the first months of war out of widely held conviction that the pursuit of pleasure was inappropriate at such a time.'<sup>58</sup> The Music in War-Time Committee was born to address the need and grew out of discussions between individuals who

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<sup>53</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: 1000 War Concerts, A Remarkable Record!', *DT*, 1/6/1918, 3.

<sup>54</sup> 'Future of British Music', *Times* 1/7/1919, 14: 'A complimentary dinner was given at Pagani's Restaurant last night to Mr Isidore de Lara in recognition of his services to British music and musicians.'

<sup>55</sup> Hirshfield's judgment that de Lara's 'stature as a composer gave him entrée into the most respected musical circles in Britain,' (Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance', 293) does not seem to be justified by the evidence examined here or his reputation before or after the war. Beecham's remarks on de Lara's compositions (Beecham, *Mingled Chime*, 193, quoted above) confirm his relatively slight stature as a composer. This assessment is borne out by the current Grove entry on de Lara which, whilst praising his orchestration as 'excellent: tasteful, kaleidoscopic, and highly original', immediately qualifies this praise: 'It is therefore all the more regrettable that a man with so fine a musical ear so frequently failed to engage musical intellect.' Nigel Burton and Susan Thach Dean. 'De Lara, Isidore,' *Grove Music Online*, accessed 14/12/12, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45705>.

<sup>56</sup> The most generous of the obituaries appeared in the *MG*. 'Mr Isidore de Lara,' *MG*, 3/9/1935, 10.

<sup>57</sup> From the two meetings in the small Queen's Hall in October 1914, for example, that were discussed earlier.

<sup>58</sup> Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance', 292.

possessed the invaluable combination of time, resources (of money, property and talent) and business-like capabilities as well as the necessary disinterest to begin and then sustain a scheme to help others, in this case one which made an enormous difference during the war.<sup>59</sup>

Mention of the committee was first made in the press in small reports, lauding its aims, and naming the well known names giving it support, as for example in the *Daily Telegraph* in October 1914:

A committee for 'Music in War-Time' [has been started] of which the secretary is Mr W. W. Cobbett. This has the approval of Sir Hubert Parry, Sir A C Mackenzie, Sir J F Bridge, and Messrs Granville Bantock and Landon Ronald, and has for its objective the creation or funding of engagements for native artists. The committee propose to aid choral societies in the payment of fees for singers, whom otherwise they might not be in the position to employ. For this purpose they have collected a certain sum of money, which they ask to have increased. The idea seems admirable and well worthy of respect.<sup>60</sup>

Little other regular mention was made of the scheme in its early days, largely because of the private nature of its work, as we shall see, but it did appear in the public domain when publicity was needed for fund-raising purposes. For example, in April 1915, the British Music Festival organised by Emil Mlynarski, which we discussed above, was to be the means of benefitting the funds of the Music in War Time Committee (hereafter MIWTC),<sup>61</sup> and again it was Robin Legge in the *Telegraph* who drew attention to it:

Mr. Howard-Jones, the well-known pianist, has secured a promise that half the money realised through the sale of tickets by members of a committee called by him for the purpose shall be given to the funds of the Committee for Music in War-time. This is an organisation which has been doing good for many months. Thus, in the last three months of 1914, they gave fifty-two concerts, for which 146 artists were engaged and paid; in the first two months of this year 112 such concerts were given and 336 artists were engaged and paid. (Please note the 'paid.') [*vic*] The concerts are given in camps and hospitals and similar places, and it is for that that funds are required. Therefore, you who are not particularly partial to native music may know that you are benefiting a useful organisation by attending the concerts in large numbers.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Initially a uniquely London-based organisation, related committees were begun in Manchester and elsewhere, although this chapter concentrates primarily on the London work.

<sup>60</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music and the War: Musical Benefits,' *DT*, 31/10/1914, 4.

<sup>61</sup> The committee was variously reported as the Committee for Music in Wartime, the Music in War-time Committee, the Committee for Music in War Time, and other variants. For clarity and simplicity, I will use the nomenclature used by the organisation itself in their final report, namely the Music in War-Time Committee (Women at Work Collection, IWM, London: Benevolent Organisations/Music in War-Time Concerts Committee/Record of the Music in War-Time Committee 1914–1920, Document Reference: B.O.7 2/4, hereafter Record of the MIWTC IWM) and summarise that as MIWTC. Annette Hullah's report may be found in full in the appendices.

<sup>62</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Music in War-time Fund,' *DT*, 3/4/1915, 4.

It was such notices as these by music critics that aimed to keep the interest of musical people alive in the committee, but for the MIWTC it was much harder, as Annette Hullah noted in her 1920 report of the wartime work:

During these two years the Committee's average of three concerts a day could have been doubled had their resources been equal to the demand. More appeals might have been made perhaps, but propaganda was less useful to them than to some societies, because their reason for existence was not immediately evident to people out of contact with it. In 1914 they were reproached with supporting art – apparently of no importance to the War; in 1915 of still doing so when there was other work to be done; in 1916 sympathy was alive but other interests had absorbed it; in 1917 there was no longer the money to spend. The nature of their work made it impossible to go into private details, and without these it remained unnecessary or unwise in the minds of many who otherwise doubtless would have subscribed.<sup>63</sup>

The committee began as a small venture of private individuals with nonetheless ambitious aims, 'formed in the first instance' to do nothing less than 'to try to save music from the paralysis war brought,' as Annette Hullah put it.<sup>64</sup> It went through several incarnations and amalgamations: as its workload became overwhelming, offers of collaborations with other, smaller scale or complementary initiatives were welcomed. One such example is the joining of both Hullah and Paget, who having been running their own schemes to provide entertainment for soldiers, realised that their own work could dovetail with that of the MIWTC's aims to keep musical events going and provide employment for musicians.

In early 1915 the Committee joined forces with the Professional Classes War Relief Council but maintained its independence utterly in matters musical whilst benefiting from the shared resources and office support of the larger organisation.<sup>65</sup> The MIWTC is not dissimilar to the War Emergency Entertainments founded by Isidore de Lara that we examined above, in that it shared one of de Lara's aims of providing gainful employment for musicians who might otherwise be unemployed. In the case of de Lara, we saw that his initial aim of assistance grew into a scheme which benefitted music generally and gave a particular impetus to British composers. In the case of the MIWTC, the scheme's original motivation was, as we saw above, the lofty

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<sup>63</sup> Record of the MIWTC, IWM. The Report was also published in successive issues of the *Musical News* in the autumn of 1920.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> The *Musical News* described the Professional Classes War Relief Council, in November 1914, thus: 'It does not propose to offer any form of charity, and, indeed, except in the cases of the direst need, professional people would not accept such. But it has brought together the heads of large bodies of professional institutions who will be able to offer special facilities for education, training, temporary employment, and so forth. Thus professional men or their children will be helped to get positions by direct assistance from the Relief Council. We are asked, therefore, to bring his Council to the notice of our readers.' 'The Professional Classes War Relief Council,' *MN*, 14/11/1914, 362.

one of 'keeping music alive.'<sup>66</sup> The *Musical News* emphasis on this ambition of the committee highlights that, although its focus inevitably became one of providing engagements for musicians, including assessing musicians for fitness to go on their registers, or suggesting that many seek alternative wartime employment, the *raison d'être* of the MIWTC was to maintain the lifeblood of the musical world at a time of great difficulty. It did this in an efficiently practical way, which evolved with the gradual changing of wartime conditions.

The potential for all musical life to grind to a halt in the first days of the war and not recover was a prevalent worry, which seemed to be borne out by the cancellation of many of the major festivals, as noted above.<sup>67</sup> With many smaller choral and orchestral societies facing either depletion of the ranks due to enlistment or serious concerns as to whether or not there would be any audience for concerts even should they manage to put them on, the normal run of musical activity seemed threatened to a dangerous degree. Whilst many such societies did indeed cease operating during the war, the MIWTC sought for and found practical ways to give such organisations assistance and thus keep musical activity continuing.

They achieved this by offering a variety of forms of assistance. These initially included: providing either players or singers (particularly male singers) for choral and orchestral concerts where gaps had occurred due to war work; the formation of a male voice choir under Walford Davies so that military camps could be visited and shown the potential of musical activity. The fund also offered some guarantees against loss; it supported in some cases teachers who had lost pupils; and it opened a register of artists who could be sent to assist organisations (soloists or rank and file).

The work developed quickly into an emphasis on helping out the many musicians whose normal livelihoods had been destabilised by the war, and although the Committee was uncompromising in refusing to take anyone who was male and of military age and fitness, or anyone whose musical standard was low, they spent a great deal of time auditioning artists. The main body of the work, from the late

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<sup>66</sup> 'Music in War-Time Committee,' *MN*, 6/3/1915, 184.

<sup>67</sup> See n.2, 140. The 1914 Brighton Festival was one of the few to proceed in the uncertain early days of the war. Pippa Drummond's study of the provincial festival in Britain ends at 1914, because of the major disruption to festivals caused by the war. Drummond, *The Provincial Music Festival*, 3 and 12. Smaller scale enterprises often continued, for example Rutland Boughton's innovative experiments at Glastonbury.

autumn of 1914, became sending concert parties to military camps and hospitals, thus providing paid engagements for artists (who were all auditioned before being taken on) and much valued entertainment for the audiences of serving soldiers. Whilst those employed were glad to have paid employment, the work was not easy: Hirshfield has noted that 'the six night tour of duty which became standard tested the endurance of every artist.'<sup>68</sup>

Serving forces personnel were not the only audiences that the MIWTC targeted. They also gave concerts to clubs of the wives of such men, and many to munitions workers as well, a development which occurred in 1916 and continued for two years:

The experiment was a success, music proving a welcome relief to the monotonous whirr of machinery. The opening concert began with catcalls and clatter, but ended in a storm of applause, and before long [Paget] was asked to give two concerts simultaneously during the dinner hour. On these occasions the soloist ran to and fro, doing their share alternately first in one room then the other, as fast as they could, for the girls and boys were as impatient of intervals as soldiers in camp. At Ponders End, Hackney Wick, etc., a concert party attended twice a week and came to be recognised as a really valuable asset, the Directors writing, not only of a general speed up, but that there were 'no complaints on concert days.' From 1916 to 1918 five hundred and four entertainments were given in these factories.<sup>69</sup>

The MIWTC was a joint effort with many of the most well-known names from London institutions either on its committee, or involved in some respect. Not only did its staffing give it a quasi-official status, it was taken as such by other people. For example, the joint committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John left all the arrangements for concerts in hospitals under their authority to the MIWTC, which demonstrates both their accepted standing and their skill in carrying out their work.

This recognition and expansion of the scheme carried its own price, and the work could not have been carried out without the extraordinary hours and quantity of work put in on a voluntary basis by the committee: for example, the groundwork of auditioning and interviewing both potential artists and those seeking financial help fell to various staff such as Hullah,<sup>70</sup> Paget, Rothery and others. The chairman of the

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<sup>68</sup> Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime,' 295.

<sup>69</sup> Record of the MIWTC, IWM. Angela Woollacott notes that concerts at mealtimes in munitions factories were popular, whether they were given by workers or invited performers. See Angela Woollacott, *On Her Their Lives Depend: Munition Workers in the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 137.

<sup>70</sup> Hullah had been a pupil of and teacher assistant to the great piano pedagogue Leschetizky in Vienna, and in 1906 had written a book on him.

committee was Hubert Parry, in whose diaries there is almost constant reference to having to attend committee meetings, not just of the MIWTC but, once it had amalgamated, also of the Professional Classes War Relief Council. This work took a great deal of his time and energy, as a letter he wrote to a prospective college entrant in August 1918 shows:

The dreadful accumulation of extra work the War has brought to me has ended my opportunities for any personal work, and had nearly brought about collapse in the past fortnight. But things do not seem likely to ease off. We have now expanded our 'Music in war-time' operations to a regular average of 3 concerts a day. They seem to be very helpful, and at the last we are helping a vast number of musicians whose circumstances would otherwise be desperate.<sup>71</sup>

Publicity given to the MIWTC in the Press usually amounted to a summary of the work as it progressed, followed by an appeal for donations. Unlike much of de Lara's work, which could be publicly reviewed, the private nature of most MIWTC events made press reporting inevitably different, and fundraising that much more difficult: a 'constant source of worry,' as noted by Hirshfield.<sup>72</sup> An example of the committee's means of publicising itself is a *Musical News* leader in September 1915. A year previously the *Musical News* had drawn attention to the work of the Professional Classes War Relief Council itself, before such time as it had amalgamated with the then not-yet-formed MIWTC. Subsequent to the subsuming of the smaller committee in the larger body, the *Musical News* continued to appeal on its behalf, noting that nearly £1000 had been given to the children of professional people to enable them to continue in education, that 161 artists had been assisted by the funding of exhibitions, and on music in particular it gave more details of the work than were often cited:

With the object of cheering the soldiers and of helping musicians three hundred concerts have been given in camps, hospitals, and elsewhere, which means that 1,000 engagements have been given, and £1,604 has been distributed to 240 musicians, while in addition a number of financial grants and guarantees have been made to recognised musical bodies or special series of concerts in order to increase the amount of employment for musicians, even though they were not on the Council's Register. The above is a very bald summary of the Council's work, which we may be sure would be largely extended if it only had more funds at its disposal. Unfortunately it is certain that before the war ends the professional classes will feel the pinch more and more severely, and all will do well to recognise in time that only by hanging together and by each one doing what he can is it possible for the distress to be alleviated.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the scale of the work, only occasional press reports brought it to the public's

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<sup>71</sup> Graves, *Parry*, 97.

<sup>72</sup> Hirshfield, 'Musical Performance in Wartime,' 295.

<sup>73</sup> 'Comments: The Professional Classes War Relief Fund,' *MN*, 11/9/1915, 235.

attention, as with the February 1915 article in the *Musical Times*, and a similar article in the same journal, which described the work of touring parties which visited provincial hospitals.<sup>74</sup> Although the MIWTC ran similar projects to some of the War Emergency Entertainments, with similar aims, it is undoubtedly the case that, at the time, de Lara's scheme received more press attention, despite – or perhaps because of – being a relatively unusual set of entertainments and having a charismatic public figure as its leader. The relative infrequency of mentions of the scheme in the musical press, as compared to de Lara's work, is due simply to its nature. Although de Lara gave many concerts in hospitals, there were also up to nine events a week given in the War Emergency Entertainments that were publicly accessible concerts. It is inevitable then, that the War Emergency Entertainments had a somewhat higher profile.

This does not denigrate the work of the MIWTC, however, and in some ways it is perfectly legitimate to equate the two schemes. This is natural enough given their similarity in aims and execution. Both schemes, for example, experienced the difficulties of auditioning potential performers, finding funds, etc, and aiming to keep music centre stage as well as helping musicians. De Lara's public profile and society audiences meant that it was easier for his work to receive public attention, but both schemes were often cited when comment was passed on the variety of work done to assist musicians. For example, Alexander Mackenzie, in paying tribute to the charity work of Clara Butt when she was the guest of honour at the Royal Academy of Music's prize giving ceremony on 22 July 1915, mentioned:

others, too, [who] have not been sparing of vigorous efforts to find or make acceptable employment for musicians. The 'Committee of Music in War-time' and Mr. Isidore de Lara, with his long series of 'War Emergency Concerts', for instance.<sup>75</sup>

Lancelot of the *Referee* clearly held both the MIWT and de Lara's organisation as comparably similar: this can be seen in the appearance of both organisations in successive paragraphs in April 1918:

The Music Committee of the Professional Classes' War Relief Council is appealing for funds to carry on its concerts and to assist professional musicians. The committee states that it has given three thousand concerts, two hundred and eight in London hospitals, and over ten thousand engagements to performers, to whom it has paid some £15,000. Four thousand munition workers are entertained weekly, and, considering the

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<sup>74</sup> 'The Music in Wartime Committee Hospital Concerts,' *MT*, 1/8/1917, 372.

<sup>75</sup> *The RAM Club Magazine*, November 1915, 9.

monotonous character of their labour, with beneficial effect on themselves and their work. There is nothing like a good song to help one along. The soldiers and their supporters want the concerts and the artists want the work. Communication should be sent to Mr Rothery, Secretary of the Music Committee, 13, Prince's-gate, S.W.7.

The Committee of the War Emergency Entertainments is also in need of funds to continue its free concerts to wounded soldiers in hospitals, to provide engagements for artists suffering from the War, and to foster British music. This organisation has in the past three and a half years given over nine hundred concerts and has paid more than £7,000 in fees to artists. It has also, as Refereaders know, founded the 'All-British' concerts at Steinway Hall, which have greatly encouraged native talent, and at which Mr. Isidore de Lara has carried on a valiant campaign against the German musical invasion. Subscriptions should be addressed to Viscountess Helmsley, Claridge's Hotel, Brook-street, W.1.<sup>76</sup>

Both organisations, which stand here as relatively high-profile examples of a host of smaller organisations on local and regional scale with similar aims and successes, received what must have been a satisfactory amount of support from the musical and national press in publicising their work where possible. The net result of the work of the MIWTC was an astonishing record of success: a vast number of concerts given (the report of the Committee shows that by the final winding up of the affairs of the Committee in 1920, 6785 concerts had been given), tens of thousands of pounds paid in fees to musicians whose normal income had disappeared, and a great deal of distraction not to mention medical assistance rendered to hospital patients.<sup>77</sup> Although it is not possible at this remove to evaluate in any specific way the benefit that the recipients of these concerts received, the evidence examined earlier of medical doctors believing that hospital care was significantly reduced by the provision of music is highly significant. Further confirmation of these benefits may be seen in a letter quoted in Hullah's report of the MIWTC,<sup>78</sup> which stressed the importance of a 'serious' concert (that is, without an entertainer):

Dear Mr. Rothery,

You have sent us many good and successful concerts here – your parties are invariably good – but I do not recollect a more enjoyable and successful one than that of last night. The trial of a 'straight' concert was complete, and the result not to be questioned.

We started with the Persian Garden, which went very well indeed, and had a fine reception. The performers would like to have been together for more than the limited time they had here for rehearsal, but, with Mr. Bradley in charge, there was very good *ensemble*, in addition to the individual talent. For the rest of the programme, I believe every item was quite fresh here; certainly there was an entire absence of the tiresome chorus song, and the over-used 'latest' ballad, that everyone – men included – knows too

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<sup>76</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Huns in Art,' *Ref*, 7/4/1918, 3.

<sup>77</sup> We saw in chapter four a quotation from a hospital commandant whose patients had been the beneficiaries of concert parties from the MIWTC.

<sup>78</sup> Record of the MIWTC, IWM.



well. The artists had the audience so completely in touch that they wished, and offered, to carry on longer than was intended, though it entailed, as they knew, using a late train back.

Near the end Mr. Dressel put on the Slow Movement and Finale of the Mendelssohn Concerto, and for 15-20 minutes absolutely gripped his audience. He fully merited a reception which would have satisfied anyone [...] I have rarely had such an enthusiastic party to thank afterwards, nor one so convinced that 'music' well done is quite able to hold its own, without the addition of the amusing elements. The chief essential, it seems to me, is to get the right atmosphere, and take not to let it be lost or spoiled. I hope we may be permitted to repeat the experiment [...] with the same party, a similar programme, and, were it possible, yourself in the audience.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank you very sincerely for this particular concert, while remembering very gratefully the many others you have given us. Those given to the bed-patients in the wards are most thoroughly appreciated by the men – the performers almost invariably like them best – but what counts most, by the officials of the hospital, from the ward sisters to the chairman – in fact everyone who is in a position to judge of their value by personal knowledge.<sup>79</sup>

This testimony from a hospital official shows that while the work of the MIWTC remained necessarily far more hidden than other such schemes, it was nonetheless highly valued by those who received it.

### 6.3 Conclusion

The close connection between music and charity has been the focus of this chapter. We have seen that this close link could be both a danger and a benefit. Early in the war many commentators highlighted the grave difficulties into which the derailment of the normal musical year and paid engagements had put many musicians, who were then often asked to give their services to raise money for charity, musical entertainment being the first recourse of many fundraisers. The double plight into which this put musicians was addressed strongly and vocally in many national as well as musical papers, and the publicity generated on their behalf does indeed seem to have borne fruit: such commentary declined as the war progressed, and the necessity of proper remuneration for musicians who were doing such important work in facilitating charitable occasions, as well as all the functions of music that we examined earlier, was well established by the end of the war.

It is, however, an irony that in many cases the form of paid engagement that musicians found during the war was precisely that – charitable in nature. This

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<sup>79</sup> Record of the MIWTC IWM: Letter from Rowland Briant, of the Horton (County of London) War Hospital in Epsom, dated 19/1/1918. Briant may have spent his war working in a War Hospital but he was also a musician who had edited the *Baptist Church Hymnal* (London: Psalms and Hymns Trust, 1900). The British Library has records of three published compositions: an anthem, a set of piano pieces and a trio.

interconnection between music and charity is one of the hallmark conditions of the war. The paradox of the war was that, to avoid giving needy people (in this case musicians) financial handouts and to give them instead gainful employment, other people needed to make donations, albeit at one remove from the musicians themselves. Such schemes as we have examined here would then in turn provide the paid engagement to the musician. The apparent mismatch between donor and intended recipient was confronted directly early in the war at a meeting of the Musical Association, when Colles, in seeking support for the MIWTC, answered exactly this query as to why there was a layer of remove from the needy person:

‘Why,’ asked a wealthy man, ‘do you want me to support provincial musical societies in giving concerts? People do not want them. I would rather give them some money to keep going. ‘Even needy artists,’ Mr Colles replied, ‘would rather work than take money for nothing.’<sup>80</sup>

Although the ‘wealthy man’ reported in the *Musical Herald* claimed that people did not want concerts, the evidence found in close examination of the musical and press that has been conducted in this study shows precisely the contrary. With the continuation of the war, music not only regained a valid place at the heart of cultural life but was at the heart of the multi-faceted work of such schemes as the MIWTC, de Lara’s War Emergency Entertainments and other such initiatives.<sup>81</sup> This meant that the net result of charitable giving to schemes which put on concerts, rather than being measurable in merely monetary worth, were of a benefit far more complex, valuable and far-reaching – in terms of both those employed to give the concerts and the effect on those who received them – than the merely exact value of the sums given.

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<sup>80</sup> ‘Music in War-Time,’ *MH*, 1/12/1914, 448.

<sup>81</sup> It should be remembered that the two schemes that I have focused on here are but a sample of the incalculable total number of initiatives that took place during the war to bring music to the wounded. A rare acknowledgement of private, small schemes is found in the *MN*. In a leader comment the journal pays tribute to ‘The immense number of private concert-parties who have, week in, week out, given their services to the hospitals for wounded soldiers are deserving of the highest praise. They have quietly and effectually administered to the entertainment of our fallen heroes without advertisement or trumpet-blare. One small party we know of has performed every Saturday, going about to outlandish places, paying their own fares, and making no public parade.’ ‘Music in 1915,’ *MN*, 1/1/16, 14.

## Materiality 10: Entertainment in the Armed Forces: Military Concert Parties



Members of 8th Royal Scots Fusiliers Concert Party singing a duet in an open air theatre. Salonika April 1916.



An impromptu concert in the wardroom aboard the British Battleship King George V.



Queerio's Concert Party, G.H.Q. Montreuil-sur-Mer, 25 May 1918.



Indian concert party performing at the Royal Ordnance Corps theatre, Baghdad, c.1917



Prisoner of War Camp Orderlies at Clausthal POW Camp, Germany<sup>82</sup>

These photographs illustrate the variety of entertainment created from within the armed forces, from informal gatherings around a piano on board a naval ship, to official concert parties. The Pierrot troupes represented here include those based in France and in Salonika, and include an Indian Army concert party in Mesopotamia and one created by Prisoners of War in Germany.

<sup>82</sup> All photographs are from the IWM Photograph Archive Collection, Catalogue Numbers Q 31862, Q 19543, Q 8960, HU 95840 and Q 115191. See Fuller, *Troop Morale* and Collins, *Theatre at War* for details of such concert parties.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusions

The London of November 1918 was a markedly different place to that which had seen crowds gather in August 1914, eager for news of political developments. Into this changed world, news of the Armistice came, as one observer noted, ‘almost as suddenly as war had come [...] It seemed almost as if one heard a dead silence and then that the whole nation gave a sigh of relief.’<sup>1</sup> The crowds also had quite a different appearance:

As in August 1914, the crowd was composed of all sorts and kinds of people – but we should have rubbed our eyes in 1914 if we had seen some of those who mingled in the crowd in 1918 – munition girls in bright overalls, who arrived in large lorries shouting and shrieking with joy; girl messengers in brown overalls, beating tin tea-trays and waving flags, staff officers in cars driven by smart khaki girls and cars from the Admiralty with their even smarter ‘WREN’ chauffeuses, and everywhere hospital men in blue.<sup>2</sup>

This description summarises the vast changes in the everyday world of most Londoners that had gradually altered the face of life for everyone over the course of the war. But, just as it had taken time for the country to accustom itself to life at war, so it took a period of readjustment for the country to realign itself to peace. The processes whereby those caught up in the giant military machine were gradually released back into normal life were slow moving (as would prove the case in the next war). Although some wartime facts of life changed almost overnight – one example is the almost immediate end to the employment of women in engineering, manufacturing and war munitions work<sup>3</sup> – in other ways the change to peacetime occupation took some considerable time.<sup>4</sup> This was as true in cultural life as in other spheres. The limits of this study prevent a detailed examination of the post-war

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<sup>1</sup> Peel, *How We Lived*, 174.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* Popular understanding has often peopled the London of 4 August 1914 with a jingoistic crowd happy to be at war, as for example in David Lloyd George’s description of ‘warlike crowds that thronged Whitehall,’ which should, counsels Adrian Gregory, be taken with ‘extreme caution.’ Gregory compares it with a contemporary description of a quiet and orderly crowd, with no feverish excitement, in town to celebrate a bank holiday and naturally enough eager for news. Gregory, *Last Great War*, 9 and 13.

<sup>3</sup> DeGroot notes that by the end of 1918, 750,000 women had been made redundant (*Blighty*, 262.)

<sup>4</sup> Those who had been involved as civilians in managing musical activities in camps, as for example Gustav Holst who went to Salonika for the YMCA in 1918, were providing an invaluable service to the men in their care. The importance of music to the troops now without a fighting goal is also shown in the fact that Vaughan Williams was removed from his post with the Royal Garrison Artillery in France, and made Director of Music in the First Army of the British Expeditionary Force in France. See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *RVW: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 130-132.

musical world in London, but it is possible to stand at the threshold of the post-war world, at the time of the Armistice, to glean a snapshot view.

I begin this concluding chapter with just such an overview of how the musical world reacted to the cessation of hostilities. Firstly, I examine reaction in the musical press to the war's end, broadly divisible into two types. The first is the widespread tendency towards retrospection. Many writers and journals took the chance in the immediate aftermath of the war, at the Armistice, at the year's end, or at the beginning of 1919, to cast an eye back over the war. Within this general inclination to look back, there was also a tendency to note actual changes in musical life: that is, commentators examined the practical effects of the war. The second main tendency was to look in the opposite direction: rather than look backwards, some commentators chose to look forward, to make predictions as to what forms musical life might have in the future, and even to invite readers to suggest what could (or should) happen in musical life now that the war was over. These two spheres are of course often overlapping, but they are distinct enough to warrant their examination as two separate but related patterns which appear in the public discourse at this time.

Following an investigation of this public commentary on the war's effects, either retrospective or forward looking, I examine the effect of the war on notions of boundaries between genres, divisions in any case often artificial but which the war challenged. In the final section, I undertake a retrospective of my own. Having examined in detail in the preceding chapters various aspects of musical life during the war as discussed in the public sphere, I will draw together the overarching themes into a summary of the published reaction of the British musical world to the war. Inevitably, this study must leave public musical commentary somewhat in limbo: while it will draw some interim conclusions on the effect of the war, it cannot proceed to investigate or chart the lasting effects of the war. Whether or not the hopes and fears expressed during and after the war as to the war's impact on music materialised requires a full-scale study of its own.

This study, then, has a finite chronological reach, the end point chosen in order to include the retrospectives of those publications which looked back in their early issues of 1919. This is not to imply that the war disappeared from the pages of the musical press, far from it: we have already seen that the *Musical News* published over

five weeks in 1920 the detailed account of the *Music in War Time Committee*. A study of the extent to which the war remained in the public consciousness of musicians in the immediate post-war and then inter-war period would be welcome.

As I noted at the beginning, many thousands of troops were still mobilised overseas at this time, and some remained on military duties in Britain. Such troops were probably more, rather than less, in need of a connection with home, and with music. In view of the revolutionary activity in various European countries which the authorities would have been keen to avoid, it was all the more important that discontent was not allowed to ferment among disillusioned troops, who had less immediate occupation than before the Armistice. The YMCA and the military together continued to invest a great deal of time and money in providing entertainment for troops, and this topic does appear occasionally in the music press. Such comment is only occasional, however, and as it has been my desire to present as far as possible the most immediate responses to the end of the war, rather than later comment which is subject to the passing of time and the attendant alteration of memory, I have chosen to end this study with the ending of sustained public attention to the topic of music as it relates to the war in the published discourse. I have thus concluded my examination of the sources I have used in March 1919, although where particularly germane remarks are made in journals of a slightly later date that assist in clarifying points or rounding out my conclusions, I have used them. A detailed investigation of music for troops which extended to the end of the period of mobilisation would, once again, be very valuable.

## 7.1 Armistice Retrospectives

The public celebrations of the Armistice were organised informally either by spontaneous celebrations (often in the streets) or in various church services or victory concerts several days later. The musical content of these expressions proved unsatisfactory to many musicians. Scholes wrote to the *Telegraph* on 16 November to complain of the amount of German music featuring in church services of thanksgiving, for example. By the following week Legge had received many complaints about Scholes' attitude: throughout the war, most people excused German church music from any taint of 'enemy' association, as Walter Parratt had expressed it early in the war.<sup>5</sup> Legge himself understood Scholes's point, having studied in

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<sup>5</sup> Sir Walter Parratt, 'Our German Church Music,' *MMR*, 1/6/1916, 185-6: this is noted in chapter two.

Germany and thus finding hymns such as 'Now Thank We All Our God,' utterly German in essence by association as well as origin. Musicus noted in the *Daily Telegraph* that a victory concert he attended in London contained music by Grieg, Järnefelt, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky, but little British music.<sup>6</sup> Many others felt so disappointed in the lack of official response – Legge noted that no military bands had been sent to join public celebrations or contribute in any way to the general rejoicing until days after the signing of the Armistice – that an organisation was formed to address a more proper and fitting use of cultural resources to mark such occasions in future.<sup>7</sup>



Figure 6 Armistice Day celebrations in Winchester: note the military band playing for the crowds.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Musicus, 'World of Music,' *DT*, 23/11/1918, 4. It seems that there were indeed few formal victory concerts, and no great celebration of British music. The only reference I have been able to find of any victory concert containing the music of Elgar, for example, are one London concert (the Independent Music Club organised a concert of 'Victory and Thanksgiving' in the Westminster Central Hall which Lancelot reported contained a fine rendering of Land of Hope and Glory by a sergeant from the Bramshott Canadian Male Voice Choir and a victory concert in Bristol's Colston Hall given by Clara Butt, who sang the same song. Lancelot, 'Yesterday's Music,' *Ref*, 18/12/1918, 3.

<sup>7</sup> The Armistice being a cessation of hostilities rather than a formal peace, there were hopes that when the peace was finally signed officially, music could play a more recognised part. Legge and others may have claimed that no military bands were used to express the public joy on 11 November, but Peel's memoir contains an account of an eye witness who recalled: 'More and more people had been flowing steadily down the Mall...Masses of lorries and motor cars, filled to overflowing with the noisiest and cheeriest people, shouting for the King, and singing the National Anthem, added to the general hubbub. Finally we heard the strains of a band, and the Guards band came swinging down from the barracks, accompanied by the Highlanders with bagpipes, and almost fought their way through the people to the courtyard of the Palace, where they played patriotic airs.' Peel, *How We Lived*, 178.

<sup>8</sup> IWM Photograph Archive Collection Catalogue No: Q 31229



This organisation was the League of the Arts for National and Civic Ceremony, which Lancelot described as ‘among the signs of our musical great awakening.’<sup>9</sup> The League’s formation was clearly an indication that many involved in musical life thought that music in public celebration needed to have more organisation behind it, and more prominence in the peace celebrations when they came. The actions taken by the League included compiling a book of popular English songs for future public occasions of celebration.<sup>10</sup> It also distributed a circular with the following text:

In these last few days it has been almost pitiful to watch the lack of direction in the manifestation of our rejoicings – a manifestation which clearly demonstrated the power of joy and emotion in our people, but just as clearly showed it to be wasted in impotent and meaningless mafficking. Such a power, with wise direction, might have been turned to a noble expression of our national spirit; indeed, there are no more potent means of consolidating and beautifying it, for music and pageantry are not only of the nature of beauty but of a bond. The use of such combined forces is obvious on days of national sorrow or rejoicing. Generally it would be exercised in open-air celebrations in the form of processional singing, or at mass meetings, and while the whole force could be gathered together centrally on national occasions, it would also be easy under this scheme to organise the resources of each district, so that local needs could be met in much the same way.<sup>11</sup>

The rejoicing in the streets on 11 November and in the days following, unfettered by formal arrangements such as the ‘gathering centrally on national occasions’ dreamt of by the League, was a spontaneous demonstration and perhaps all the better for not having had any formal organisation. That a lack of military bands was remarked upon may well have been more a matter of military inflexibility, I would argue, rather than any want of musical sensibility.

Legge noted that other parts of the country chose considerably more appropriate music in their celebrations of the Armistice. He recounts with something approaching envy some of the various victory concert programmes which took place outside London, although in smaller cities, fewer venues and orchestral players may have

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<sup>9</sup> Lancelot, ‘Matters Musical: Achievements and Prospects,’ *Ref*, 29/12/1918, 3.

<sup>10</sup> In 1919, Stainer and Bell published the first of four volumes, *The Motherland Song Book*: the book is occasionally cited in scholarly work on English song, as in Banfield’s *Sensibility and English Song*, 138, referring to a song of Stanford, ‘There is no Land like England.’ Songs by Holst and Vaughan Williams published in this volume also mean that the work of the League still appears in academic discourse.

<sup>11</sup> A more complete account of the reasons behind the formation of the League of the Arts for National and Civic Ceremony may be found in the *MH*: ‘Music for Joy Days,’ *MH*, 1/1/1919, 21. Those responsible for the League’s formation included Adrian Boult and Henry Walford Davies. One cannot help but feel that those who lamented the lack of community singing ability, which they felt responsible for the lack of such music on Armistice Day, had a severely limited understanding of the way in which a crowd of ordinary people would choose to celebrate the good news of the cessation of hostilities.

meant a natural concentration of efforts impossible in so diverse a city as London. In particular, he somewhat enviously quotes from Ernest Newman's reaction to 'Mr Appleby Matthews Peace Concert' in Birmingham Town Hall. This included Elgar's *Carillon* and *Spirit of England* (neither of which, notes Legge, was heard anywhere in London in celebration of the Armistice):

The occasion was not one to criticise as a concert. Rather was it a communal outpouring of emotion, the attempt of the better part of the soul in us to steady itself in a great crisis, to realise at what price victory had been won, and the need there still is for courage and faith in humanity. We can only congratulate ourselves that in these two poignant works of Elgar and his poets we have things worthy of a great nation in its hour of trial; it is something to have kept so fine an edge upon both our loathing and our hope. The whole difference between the thing we have been fighting and our own sustaining ideal is summed up in the difference between the crude German Hymn of Hate and the lofty disdain and ardent humanism of these two great works. Last night they tuned us, as they always do, to a nobler philosophy, and laid a great compassionate, consoling hand upon our racked hearts.<sup>12</sup>

Newman's words are noteworthy not merely because they show that he was prepared to suspend some of his critical musical faculties, as we have seen before in his reaction to the conjunction of music, emotion, and wartime tragedy. They are significant because they show that a celebration of victory need not be incompatible with a recognition of loss and tragedy.

These concerns over how the public used or were given music to express their emotions on the signing of the Armistice were but one way in which the musical press responded to the end of the war. Many journals also undertook a retrospective look at the period of war, either at the end of 1918 or within their first few issues of 1919. Some of the published retrospective reaction was of private viewpoints, like that of Dr. Robert T White, published in the *Music Student* of February 1919, in which he declared, 'Frankly, the great majority of us are disappointed with the part played by music in the great war,'<sup>13</sup> a view somewhat at odds with the generally positive tone taken in public commentary. Others were editorial comments or surveys, such as 'Music During The War' in the *Musical Times* of January 1919, or the *Music Student's* December 1918 article, 'How Music Helped to Win the War,' two articles with a

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<sup>12</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Armistice Music,' *DT*, 23/11/1918, 4, quoting Newman. The 'Hymn of Hate' was a German poem of 1914 by Ernst Lissauer, aimed at engendering anti-British feeling. Its repeated line 'Gott strafe England,' caught on, and in Stefan Zweig's memoir he describes its widespread impact, quoted in Cowgill, 'Elgar's War Requiem,' 339. See also Cowgill, 339-40 for a description of the impact of Lissauer's poem in Britain, including a humorous rendition of the poem at the Royal College of Music. Parry's diary records Stanford's reaction to this event: 'Heard Stanford is purple with rage about our singing "the Song of Hate"!' ShulbredeD, 10/3/1915.

<sup>13</sup> Robert T. White, 'Retrospect and Prospect,' *MStud*, 1/2/1919, 222.

very different focus. These, and two contrasting summaries in other publications form the basis of this section, summaries chosen to represent both a variety of views and a range of different types of publication.<sup>14</sup>

The *Music Student* published a retrospective consideration of the war in December 1918, 'How Music Helped to Win the War.'<sup>15</sup> This is a summary by its editor Percy Scholes of various ways in which music proved invaluable to the war effort. In complete contrast to the *Musical Times*' account of music on the home front, its emphasis on music and the military during the war makes it a valuable companion piece. It combines the reiteration of the message that music was of practical assistance to the soldier, with specific examples. Based on the YMCA motto, 'Whatever helps to cheer the soldier wins the war,' it ends with the (somewhat improbable) claim that had the enemy had no music and the Allies been well supplied with it from the outset, the war would have been over within a year. Its main message is that the war had proved that 'the need for music is universal.'<sup>16</sup>

'Music During The War' was the *Musical Times* leading editorial article for January 1919, and constituted a brief but ambitious survey of the entirety of musical life in Britain for the war years. It is useful as both an overview and as one example of the

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<sup>14</sup> A surprising omission from the retrospectives I cover here is any mention of the formation of the British Music Society by Eaglefield-Hull in 1918. Although remarked upon at the time it was established, it retained a relatively low profile in the closing stages of the war and only later gained a greater national recognition, although it is almost certainly true to say that its foundation at the tail end of the war was materially and philosophically assisted by the focus on British music that the war had caused. Its announcement in the *MMR* in August 1918 (Eaglefield-Hull was the journal's editor from 1912 to 1928) stated that 'A new society is being formed, whose sole aim is to be the furtherance of British music.' ('Editorial,' *MMR*, 1/8/18, 169). The society was not narrowly centred on Britain, but also interested in reopening links with Continental musicians of all nationalities, and that same issue added 'National and International' after the society's name in an advertisement on 186. In January 1919 the Society's aim was reiterated as 'to assert at home and abroad the importance of British music of all periods' ('A New Music Society,' *MMR*, 1/1/19, 3). The international focus did not please all, however: the proposal to include Berlioz's *Nuits d'Été* and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* in a 1920 Congress of British Music organised by the Society prompted an angry Granville Bantock to complain to the *Times* of the 'gratuitous insult to British music and talent. Can we imagine for one moment a *Deutscher Musik Verein* committing so disloyal and egregious an act of folly as to devote the greater part of a national festival programme to the work of a modern British composer, however famous he might be? But we have neither faith in our national music nor loyalty to our composers. After all the talk of the better opportunities for British music as one of the collateral consequences of the war, it seems as if the old parasitic system is to be resumed; we are to return like dogs to our own vomit, and the lying promises with which we have been deluded are to be forgotten.' Granville Bantock, 'British Music: An Inconsistent Programme,' *Times*, 20/4/1920, 10. For more information on Arthur Eaglefield Hull and the British Music Society, see Rachel Cowgill and Karen Arrandale, 'Institutionalising Alternatives: Arthur Eaglefield Hull, E. J. Dent, and the Promotion of Internationalist Musical Modernism in Post-First World War Britain': *Alternative Modernisms*, Cardiff University, 16/5/2013.

<sup>15</sup> Percy Scholes, 'How Music Helped to Win the War,' *MStuð*, 1/12/1918, 127-129.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 129.

way in which the facts of musical happenings and developments of those years may be interpreted:

On August 4, 1914, most of us anticipated a short war, with an almost entire cessation of musical activities on the part of the belligerent. We have had instead a long war, and, in this country at all events, an unprecedented amount of music-making. That a great proportion of the music thus made should be of an inferior quality was inevitable [...] Of the thousands of folk who during the war have found comfort and distraction in music, the majority have partaken of the inferior type merely because it happened to be the most get-at-able, and because it made the least demand on brain and pocket. It is the first step that counts: these crowds are now incipient musicians [...] Our art, then, is this much to the good – its recreative and consoling powers are by way of being recognised by the public.<sup>17</sup>

This leader article combines something of White's pessimism – he thought musical effort had been 'feeble,' the *Musical Times* calling it 'inferior' – and a general optimism about the future of music. It recognises that the war provided unprecedented opportunities for contact with many different forms of music, and was valued for its worth in 'comfort and distraction,' a topic we investigated above. In its retrospective of music during the war years, it highlights three main positive points that stand out. These are: a great increase in chamber music activity; the popularity of opera; and the increase in composition of native composers. Also noted are a general decline in orchestral and choral concert standards, but this it attributes to the lack of personnel. Rather than see this as a negative, it expresses surprise that such large organisations were able to keep going at all, in view of the difficulties of recruitment and recourse for large-scale performances.

What is also significant in the *Musical Times*' retrospective is that throwaway remark relating to much of the music in which people found 'comfort and distraction' during the war being of 'inferior type.' The recurrence of attitudes like this, which map directly on to Bourdieu's notions of classification and taste as expressed in *Distinction*, will be discussed below: while some allowed the war to develop their attitudes of what was and was not suitable, acceptable, or 'good' in musical terms, others ended the war with reinforced attitudes about their own standards of superiority, and the need to impose them on others.

The *Musical Times*' summary included hallmarks found in most such retrospectives, and provides a convenient summary of the main factors of musical development

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<sup>17</sup> 'Music During The War,' *MT*, 1/1/1919, 9.

during the war. This particular article, however, in commenting on a falling off in standards in orchestral concerts, is not in fact in general agreement with reviews that this journal made during the war itself. Whilst I have been able to find instances in which the *Musical Times* commented on the inappropriate length of the programme, for example, the standard of playing, is either not commented on at all, or favourably remarked upon.<sup>18</sup> A more typical comment may be seen in May 1918 on the Royal Philharmonic Society season just closing, which mentioned both 'the attractiveness of the programmes submitted and the excellence of the performances.'<sup>19</sup>

Contrasted with the positive nature of the article in the *Musical Times*, Robert White's comments in the *Music Student* in early 1919 were less optimistic. He praised the 'few energetic spirits' who had tried to respond to the changed conditions of war with new initiatives, including de Lara, Walford Davies and Scholes in this compliment. However, he felt that forcing British music or British instruments on the public would be unproductive, an attitude perhaps born of his involvement with musical education in schools. Whilst he cautioned against too much overt pushing of nationalism in music, a matter we considered in chapter three, it is surprising that White should describe music in Britain during the war as 'feeble.'<sup>20</sup> A truly musical nation, he felt, would have responded musically in a stronger way to the trials of war.<sup>21</sup> White's view serves to show that, for all that this thesis has attempted to identify patterns within the public discourse of music, there was in reality no homogenous, discrete, monolithic view of music during the war, nor afterwards. Whilst I have identified certain discernible patterns, within these patterns, individual opinion varied widely. In addition, it is highly likely that private opinion may well have differed considerably from the publicly expressed. In time of war, a uniformity of positive outlook was often highly valued, either in the form of propaganda (official or unofficial) or in a general atmosphere where differences were temporarily put aside. The extent to which the private and the public sphere differed in this regard

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<sup>18</sup> For example, the *MT* had criticised a 1916 London Symphony Orchestra concert under Beecham for being 'unwieldy' in its programming: 'It found the audience weary and left them still more weary.' 'London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall,' *MT*, 1/7/1916, 341.

<sup>19</sup> 'Royal Philharmonic Society,' *MT*, 1/5/1918, 215.

<sup>20</sup> White was a music educator who was particularly interested in analysing why all the good effort put into music education had apparently borne so little fruit: in a January 1919 article in the *Musical Times* he notes that the end of the war revealed how little music was in a shared public consciousness, and proposed some measures for addressing it. 'A Pressing Need,' *MT*, 1/1/1919, 24-26. An account of his views on music education may be found in an interview with him in the *MH*; 'Dr Robert T White,' *MH*, 1/2/1910, 34-38.

<sup>21</sup> Robert T White, 'Retrospect and Prospect,' *MStud*, 1/2/1919, 222.

would be an invaluable study as a companion to the present enquiry.

Although the *Musical Times* and *Music Student's* retrospectives concentrated on different musical spheres, it is important to note that generally speaking, the music press considered both home and fighting fronts in their reviews of musical life during the war. These articles often contrasted an assessment of musical life at home with a consideration of the presence and value of music in soldiers' lives at the front. This study has attempted to show that it is not possible to make a clear divide between civilian and military lives. The fact that each received dedicated attention at this time, and that reviews of music for the military were clearly of lasting interest to civilian readers, serves to illustrate the link between home and fighting front.

A further annual review of music in the war was published in the *Era Annual*.<sup>22</sup> Its annual had in earlier years given a summary of the previous twelve months' cultural activities, but for 1919 the *Era* considered the whole span of the war, and reflected on the future of music. Not being exclusively a musical publication, the *Era* is of particular interest, as it may be taken to represent themes of interest to the general reader as well as those particularly interested in theatre and music. The *Era's* summary emphasised the change in attitude wrought by the war, for example, the way in which music played a useful and practical role, as we investigated in chapter four. Such an understanding of the indispensability of music, linked here to the winning of the war and a change in attitude to the value of music, connects the views published in the *Era* with those of Percy Scholes:

The war has changed the national attitude towards music and musicians. Up to 1914, the Britisher in the mass regarded the art purely as an amusement, as something quite apart from the serious business of life. And in the first black month it seemed to be tacitly accepted that there could be no place for music in the world of terrible realities all about is [...] But with the growing of stress and strain the power of music to cheer, comfort, and sustain, was realised. The call came from camps, hospitals, even from the front battle line, and an answering organisation, the completest in music's history, sprang into being [...] In short, as a contributive element to the mental and moral fitness on which the power and the will to win the war depended music was found to be indispensable.<sup>23</sup>

The *Era* also echoed many of the positive results of the war that had been highlighted

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<sup>22</sup> The *Era* was a Sunday newspaper which had been in existence since 1837, which aimed to appeal to all, but had in the beginning a particular interest in sport and entertainment, which over the years began to concentrate on theatrical and musical life: in addition to its weekly publication, it also produced an annual edition: originally called the *Era Dramatic and Musical Almanack*, in 1893 it became the *Era Annual*.

<sup>23</sup> The *Era Annual* 1919, 58.

by the *Musical Times*: the popularity of opera in English, for example, and ‘a remarkable stimulation of interest in chamber music,’ noting a rise in the number of chamber music ensembles, and an equally hopeful increase in the number of British composers writing for chamber ensembles.

The final retrospective that I examine is that of Lancelot of the *Referee*. In the paper’s final edition of 1918, the critic looked back at the music of the war years in an unmistakably positive light, reinforcing many of the conclusions I have attempted to draw out from the evidence of the war years. He began with the way in which the conditions of war, both at home and on the fighting fronts, had tested and proved that art music was of practical value. He noted that evidence of the improvement in and stimulation of British music by the war was its greater appreciation by audiences. Both composers and executants had, he felt, benefited from more exposure and a greater share of critical appreciation. He also pointed out that a greater professionalism prevailed in music; inadequately trained or wrongly encouraged musicians of limited talent had been obliged to relinquish the profession, due to both limited opportunities and resources as well as to more discerning and honest audiences who valued good performances more highly than before the war. As with other commentators, Lancelot drew attention to the greatly increased interest in chamber music, noting that the London String Quartet’s Boxing Day concert had sold out.

Lancelot thought it particularly positive that during the war, greater attention had been paid to the taste and wishes of audiences. He hoped that this, and all the positive improvements that he noted, would be continued in the future. He – and most other commentators – desired that the radical shake up of society caused by the war would extend as far as the concert hall. Perhaps the greater attention paid to the audience experience in musical commentary of the war period was a result of the appreciation of the service of the many in the country’s cause. The war made people aware for the first time of how many outside their own immediate sphere lived.

Historians have investigated the claim often made that class structure and society were fundamentally changed by the war, an idea often promulgated during the war

itself.<sup>24</sup> Trevor Wilson, for example, has noted the belief that 'the common endeavours and sacrifices of all sections were eliminating class barriers.'<sup>25</sup> He concludes:

Certainly, class divisions receded in the face of national peril. But that is saying nothing more than that, underlying the class system of Britain, is a sense of national identity. Moments of external threat make its existence particularly apparent [...] The war affirmed national solidarity. It did not thereby eliminate social separation. It is still the case that the war effected social change [...] it helped to accomplish a compression of classes. But bringing classes closer together, especially in economic terms, proved not to be the same thing as removing class barriers; and after the war the process of compression was in part reversed.<sup>26</sup>

The war undeniably caused a temporary shaking up of the usual divisions of society, on the home front as well as in the services, and this alteration affected musical commentators. Isidore de Lara thought more attention being paid to the taste of the people (what he called 'the Democracy') was all to the good:

a great change will come over the spirit of the world after this war, and that the conditions of the musical art will change completely, the democracies will insist upon being invited to the aesthetic banquet, and new forms will have to be found to suit their love of truth and simplicity. The musical prig, the intellectual Caliban with his ridiculous 'twistings' and 'turnings' of a tune, his contrapuntal somersaults is destined to disappear. The Democracy is rapidly acquiring a Mind but it still has a heart that feels and responds to emotion and spontaneity: the composer of the future will have to take this into consideration.<sup>27</sup>

In the way that the war caused a radical derailment of norms, however temporary, it provoked commentators like de Lara to reassess the connection of the wider public with music. This speculation as to future developments continued in the immediate period after the Armistice, when many commentators looked towards the future.

## 7.2 Music after the War: Suggestions, Prophecies and Predictions

In its November 1918 issue, the *Musical Herald* announced a prize competition for a paper 'not exceeding 300 words, on "Music after the War: How it may be Revived

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<sup>24</sup> See DeGroot, *Blighty*, 164-170 for a discussion of the class system and the ways in which it was both perpetuated and temporarily broken down in the wartime army.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, *Myriad Faces*, 780.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 780-1.

<sup>27</sup> Isidore de Lara, 'English Music, German Masters,' *FR*, 1/5/1915, 850.



and Developed.” The results were published in the first issue of 1919.<sup>28</sup> The winning entry was by a soldier wounded during the war and writing from hospital, W. R. Anderson, who began with an arresting proposition which sums up well both the recognition of war-time musical achievements and the concern for the future that was the hallmark of much writing at this time: ‘Music has found itself in war service. How best can it continue its mission now?’<sup>29</sup>

Anderson’s points were fundamentally practical ones, designed to fulfil the aim of making music ‘an essential part of the life of every human being.’ Notwithstanding the doubtful ethical implications of imposing one’s own view on others, his ideas were clearly rooted in his own experience of the beneficial effect of music, and aimed squarely at bringing the lived experience of music into everyday life. He suggested that schoolchildren should be exposed only to good music, to folk tunes and ‘good modern tunes’ (the subjective nature of such a definition escaped Anderson, as it continues to escape many today); he urged music teachers to adopt modern methods to relate learning to everyday life; he wanted musicians to become more publicly active in order to introduce more people from a wider sphere to music, in everyday language; he wanted an extension of concerts and operas at accessible prices; and he suggested every factory and business should have a small in-house choir.

These concerns, albeit expressed by just one observer, may be taken as representative of the hopes and wishes of many in the immediate post-war period. Extracts from other entries to the competition were also given, the choice of which reveals common threads running through hopes for musical activity. Suggestions for music’s development included audience education; new methods of training young singers; reviving those choral and orchestral societies who had lost many male singers due to the war; the formation of musical clubs in small towns; state provision of instrumental teaching; and an increase in musical activity on a local level, from small orchestras to musical evenings in people’s houses. Anderson’s ideas of the value and efficacy of music of personal and community involvement in music were, of course, not necessarily new. The Victorian and Edwardian eras had stressed the value of music to the community and the increase in numbers of choral societies as well as

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<sup>28</sup> In the time intervening between the advertisement of the competition and the publishing of the results, of course, the war had ended, but there is no evidence from the entries that this materially affected the publication.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Prize Competitions,’ *MH*, 1/1/1919, 14. It is likely that W. R. Anderson is the same as the writer of that name who wrote regularly in the *Musical Times* and elsewhere in the 1930s and 40s.

communal singing in schools was well established before the war, and there is a great deal of evidence that this type of musical engagement with society was already commonplace.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the extensive programme notes that London concert halls provided for many concerts were an early form of listener education, and Christina Bashford's article on Victorian chamber music has demonstrated a living tradition of domestic music making.<sup>31</sup> But perhaps Anderson's ideas (even if he thought he was suggesting something new) highlight the growing public attention given to such ideas. At the very least, his suggestions highlight a strand of interest, a re-focusing of attention in the nature of a rediscovery. An examination of the amateur musical sphere of the later twentieth century would reveal that many of the ideas which he wanted to implement in modern forms, particularly the state subsidy of instrumental music, renewed emphasis on singing in schools, and audience (listener) education, did in fact come to pass.<sup>32</sup> The value of such ideas, then, was more widely accepted than their expression in a small competition might indicate.

Other hopes for the future were also expressed in public commentary at this time, in varying ways. In December 1918, Robin Legge published in the *Daily Telegraph* some correspondence he had received regretting that, despite the large number of concerts being put on, London still lacked a popular, readily accessible and most of all varied centre for high-quality music. His correspondent lamented that on a recent occasion, a relative keen to go to a good concert had been unable to find anything other than the music-hall for his entertainment. Legge agreed with his correspondent that London was in need of a venue, like the Winter Gardens in Bournemouth, where musical entertainment was readily available, of a high standard, regularly changing, but accessible to all, and suggested that his correspondent's ideal already existed, albeit only for soldiers and sailors.

This was an establishment called *Ciro's*. Formerly a London restaurant, *Ciro's* had been handed over by its owner to the YMCA during the latter part of the war, to provide a recreational centre for soldiers and sailors on leave in the city. The *Era* noted that this was somewhere that soldiers could indulge a newly-acquired taste for

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, McGuire's first chapter, 'Dissenters, Philanthropists, and the World of Tonic Sol-fa,' in *Music and Victorian Philanthropy*. John Francmanis's account of Mary Wakefield and the competitive choral movement in 'The "Folk-Song" Competition,' is also germane.

<sup>31</sup> See Bashford, 'Historiography and Invisible Musics.'

<sup>32</sup> E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London and Toronto: Routledge & Kegan Paul and University of Toronto Press, 1964), 259-265, examines the development of both the 'musical-appreciation movement' and the improvement of music in schools in the immediate post-war period.

chamber music: 'the daily quartet playing has been of the great attractions at Ciro's, since that notorious restaurant was taken over two years ago and made a recreative centre for service men and their friends by the YMCA.'<sup>33</sup> Legge thought Ciro's a model for the kind of entertainment centre that his correspondent mooted, one where young or single people could attend, be sure of hearing good music.<sup>34</sup>

London badly wants the kind of concert-place which shall be to the greater public what Ciro's has become for the particular public of soldiers and sailors for which its brilliant management caters [...] My correspondent's letter [continues]: 'What we want in London is a big central hall or winter garden [...] where good music can be heard afternoon and evening. Songs galore, part-songs, and fine Old English madrigals, no less than orchestral music; give us military bands on occasion if you like, on certain days, as Dan Godfrey gives them at Bournemouth. To be quite free-and-easy, comfortable chairs, not, emphatically not, rows or benches, and, if you like, light refreshments at cheap rates.' [...] These, says she, are wanted in London every day and all the time. And I cordially agree. Last winter I had several letters from provincial music-lovers who had the habit of coming to London during the Christmas vacation; their common complaint was that there was almost no serious and good music to be heard in the concert-rooms during those weeks.<sup>35</sup>

Legge's serious consideration of this letter and his support for the ideas it contains, demonstrates that commentators perceived a need in the immediate post-war period for accessible, 'good' music – and by this, as his correspondent makes clear, *not* the music-hall (although such venues did provide concert music as part of a mixed programme, as I discuss below). This requirement is likely to be directly attributable to the experiences of many in the war, where music was for many made readily accessible, either in camp, base, factory or hospital, and where the benefits of such entertainment were realised.

Ciro's was also cited by Musicus, Legge's colleague at the *Telegraph*, as an example of how military and other perhaps not to be expected audiences appreciate the very best in classical music:

On Boxing night Madame Kirkby Lunn and Miss Marjorie Hayward gave an extraordinarily successful recital at Ciro's for the benefit of the soldiers and sailors at a loose end that day. The program afforded yet one more proof of what often I have said, that Ciro's audience asks for the best we can offer. Madame Lunn sang songs by Frank Bridge, Stanford, Dunhill, Bantock, Quilter, Herbert Hughes, and Liddle – not a bad

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<sup>33</sup> The *Era Annual* 1919, 61. Legge wrote an account of the work at Ciro's in the *DT*: Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: Ciro's,' 9/11/1918, 3. See also Leask, *Lena Ashwell*, 142-3.

<sup>34</sup> His correspondent also made the suggestion that in turn, each London conservatoire could provide the music, thus giving students much needed experience in public performance and stimulating both audiences and composers. Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: A Wail and a Suggestion,' *DT*, 14/12/1918, 4.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

selection, this, of native composers! [...] If only we can keep the good before such audiences after the war!<sup>36</sup>

The YMCA's work at Ciro's was in the care of Lena Ashwell, who had delegated the musical direction to Paget Bowman. Her memoir gives some idea of the serious commitment and high standards of music given there. I stress this point for two reasons. Firstly, this enterprise, privately given to soldiers and sailors as a place for refreshment and entertainment where they were allowed to bring female friends and relatives (something of a departure for the YMCA), was held up by several musical commentators as a model for what London needed.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, it reinforces the findings of chapter five, that serious music was welcomed and enjoyed by serving men, and valued in and for itself:

The [piano] quartet was so good that the place was haunted by musicians<sup>38</sup> [...] The quartet played all the really classical music as well as the best of modern works and the men listened with intense interest [...] While an appeal to popular taste for selections from grand and light operas was made, they gradually introduced into their repertory works by British composers such as Frank Bridge, Sir Edward Elgar, Percival Fletcher, Edward German, Percy Grainger, Roger Quilter, Coleridge Taylor, as well as [...] Bizet, D  libes, Grieg, Massenet, Mozart, Rachmaninov, Saint-Sa  ns, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Wagner and many others. The best works were quickly found to rival the others in popularity, and in 1918 the quartet began a series of chamber music in the small hall underneath the large hall, at which the works of Beethoven, Brahms, Dvorak, Faur  , and Schumann were given. The audience at these concerts increased to such an extent that it became necessary to give them in the large hall, and they became an outstanding feature. Thus for a time there was established in the centre of London a concert hall in the nature of a music club for the people where the evening could be spent in a most enjoyable and musically intellectual way [...] The quartet and their colleagues endeared themselves and their work to thousands of people.<sup>39</sup>

No such enterprise as a version of Ciro's for the general public was ever instituted. Although Legge's comments show that some, at least, were seeking such a venue, it is unlikely that those who called for such a response to London's post-war musical thirst realised the extent to which the success of Ciro's was that it was a product of the war. This is a point to which I shall return below, that many of those who were so vocal with regard to the rhetoric of opportunity were unaware that what they saw as fertile, new ground was in fact temporary ground, which had appeared out of the

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<sup>36</sup> Musicus, 'World of Music,' *DT*, 28/12/1918, 4.

<sup>37</sup> 'Ciro's was the first YMCA hut where the women were welcomed with the men. The not altogether unnatural fear that the innovation might be abused, and that the men might bring in a class of women that were unsuitable, proved to be without any basis.' Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 212.

<sup>38</sup> The quartet at Ciro's was a piano quartet made up of women, led by Mrs Herbert Withers; the music for the quartet, taken from all areas of the classical repertoire, was arranged for them by Roger Quilter. See Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 212-3 and Robin Legge, 'Ciro's,' *DT*, 9/11/18.

<sup>39</sup> Ashwell, *Troubadours*, 212-3.

unusual conditions and habits of wartime life, and in some cases was to sink out of sight once the war had ended.

One of the strands that has emerged from this study of the public discourse is a frequent mention in the pages of the serious music press of genres, topics, songs or pieces that in wartime would be unusual to find there. It is to this question of whether or not the war increased the porosity of musical boundaries that I now turn.

### 7.3 The War's Temporary Effect on Notions of Taste

It is possible to see evidence in the printed commentary which relates to music during the war a loosening of the sometimes rigid divisions between, for example, concert-hall music and popular music, be that heard in music-hall, cinema, or sung by soldiers. Before the war, it is hard to imagine that Robin Legge would have dedicated the major proportion of his column over two Saturdays to 'Music in the Music-Halls,' as he did in September 1915.<sup>40</sup> Legge's remarks about *Ciro's*, for example, are also representative of this softening of attitudes and boundaries between various musical spheres.

Legge was one of many commentators during the war who, whilst championing the best in music, also had a broadly tolerant view, and regularly made a plea for composers not to neglect the lighter side of music. This related both to a lightening of concert music itself, and to an interest in music that would usually be heard outside concert halls. Legge hoped that composers would 'abandon their melancholia and write music of a lighter texture or more cheerful countenance than that which has been so much the rule in recent times.'<sup>41</sup> In particular, he noted that wartime audiences at the Coliseum had the great benefit of hearing the music of Dora Bright, whose compositions for short ballets he praised highly in 1915, deploring the fact that such uplifting and high-quality music was missed by more serious music-lovers who would not consider attending a music-hall:<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music in the Music Halls, No. 1,' *DT*, 4/9/1915, 3; Robin Legge, 'Music in the Music Halls, No. 2,' 11/9/1915, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: A New English Opera,' *DT*, 8/1/1916, 13.

<sup>42</sup> Legge's championing of Bright's accessible music does not mean he had no time for more modern composers of ballet music, and elsewhere he wrote of Stravinsky and Debussy, for example, alongside Bach, Brahms and Beethoven as 'composers universally called great.' Robin Legge, 'The Spirit of Nationalism,' *DT*, 3/5/16, 6.

I am firmly convinced that it is in this lighter form of music that our strength lies, though far be it from me to use the term 'lighter' in any kind of derogatory sense. How infinitely preferable for all concerned would be a series of beautiful ballets written by native composers for the small orchestras of the better music-halls than all the cheery symphonies and symphonic poems about the joys of death or the fun and frivol [*sic*] of pain, of misery, and so forth! Believe me there is a vast future before the successful ballet composer. I suppose he or she must abandon hope of ever becoming known to London concert-goers, who if they are super-saturated with 'serious' music (as if all worthy music were not serious) will not take seriously the music of the music-halls. But does that really matter?<sup>43</sup>

The Coliseum was often held up as an example of the happy blending of various forms of music, and first-class musicians were often invited to perform there. Pianist Mark Hambourg responded very positively to his time there during the war:

My time at the Coliseum was a wonderful experience. The first time I was urged to play there, I made it a condition that I would only present the finest music, classical masterpieces, and representative pianoforte works. They said they would agree to anything I stipulated, and my programmes proved a great attraction. Without frills or trappings of any kind, I came on to the platform as in any other concert hall, and played Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Chopin. The audience listened to me with an attention equal to that of any I have every known, and the public never seemed to have enough of what I gave them. I had separate programmes specially printed with the names of one hundred standard classics from my repertoire. Every day I had requests sent me by post asking for various items, and letters afterwards thanking me for having played them.<sup>44</sup>

Legge's colleague Musicus remarked that the last movement of Tchaikovsky's B flat Piano Concerto had been well received 'to the obvious enjoyment of the Coliseum's patrons:'

That the lovers of 'variety' now appreciate the introduction of such an element – a kind of miniature piano recital – into the entertainment provided for them is surely a healthy sign.<sup>45</sup>

Legge himself was unusually positive regarding the 'halls,' which he saw as offering the possibility of 'salvation' for young composers.<sup>46</sup> Although a great deal of orchestral music had been written by a new generation of prolific composers since

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<sup>43</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music of the Day: The Ballet, Music Hall and Concert Room,' *DT*, 23/10/1915, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Hambourg, *From Piano to Forte*, 252-3.

<sup>45</sup> Musicus, 'Music at the Coliseum,' *DT*, 1/4/1916, 6.

<sup>46</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music in the Music Halls, No. 1,' *DT*, 4/9/1915, 3'. It should be remembered that concert music in the Coliseum was not a new development in the war years: Elgar's *Crown of India*, for example, had been performed there in 1911. However, the amount of such music on regular programmes certainly increased during the war, as well as the public commentary thereupon.

the revival of British musical life by Parry, Stanford and Mackenzie some twenty-five years previously, he nonetheless felt that these recent compositions were not being programmed, nor meeting audience requirements.<sup>47</sup> The fact that composers largely wrote in old forms meant that much recently composed music was too long for the attention span of an audience which had grown up in a far speedier age:

The day is long dead when symphonies of an hour's length are likely to make a world appeal. This is an age of rapidity, a fact that has been realised above all by the Music-Halls. Six years ago Blériot flew the Channel for the first time. Less than twenty years ago I saw fifty motor-cars leave a London hotel for Brighton; if memory serves, only four reached the haven where they would all have been; the majority could not surmount the hill at Croydon! What has our music done in the twenty years, when motoring, flying, and so on have come into being and marvellously succeeded? At best it has stood where it then was. Yet all life is changed since then, and only music has stagnated.<sup>48</sup>

Legge's advice was that composers – following Dora Bright's example – should aim to compose for the varied and, he thought, discerning audiences of the music-halls. It is possible to see in the increasing popularity and publication of British light music in the interwar period (for example, Eric Coates and Haydn Wood) a partial answer to this perceived need, although there continued (and continues) to be a perceptible divide between genres.

We saw above that other commentators also saw value in musical styles, genres or pieces that pre-war they might not have. We have noted in the course of this study that Julius Harrison praised ragtime when he was involved in musical concerts for serving ('Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner were all forgotten');<sup>49</sup> Ivor Novello's 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' was praised in the *Referee*;<sup>50</sup> Ernest Newman was prepared to credit music he thought insufferably sentimental with spiritual power;<sup>51</sup> Isidore de Lara mixed jugglers and dancers and humorists with musicians.<sup>52</sup> Even Lena Ashwell, so concerned to make sure that her parties provided their audiences with nothing but the best music, could nonetheless see in the massed voices of men singing

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<sup>47</sup> British orchestral music written during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was sometimes critically well received; Mackenzie's overture *Britannia*, for example, was described in the *Manchester Guardian* as 'brilliant and inspired' ('The Musical World: Queen's Hall Symphony Concerts,' *MG*, 25/3/1900, 6). However, such music was but rarely programmed as the main feature of concerts, and in 1913 the *Observer* noted that 'Stanford, Parry, Mackenzie and the academic school generally stir not the slightest interest.' 'British Art and British Audiences,' *Observer*, 23/11/1913, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Robin Legge, 'Music in the Music Halls, No. 1,' *DT*, 4/9/1915, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Julius Harrison, 'Somewhere in France,' *MT*, 1/7/1915, 400-401.

<sup>50</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical,' *Ref*, 25/2/1917, 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The Artist and the People,' *MT*, 1/10/1914, 605.

<sup>52</sup> De Lara, *Many Tales*, 252.

popular songs such as 'The Long, Long Trail,' something transcendent:

Thousands of voices would give some expression to the deep sentiment of the British for 'roses,' for 'flowers,' for 'Home,' for 'Flo,' one's whole body shook and trembled in response, and one wondered if the music of the spheres, the great invisible choirs, were perhaps giving voice through these human hearts to the eternal desire for beauty and goodness.<sup>53</sup>

Of course others were not prepared to compromise on their value judgements. Edwin Evans, in his work with Belgian refugees, was adamant that variety and serious elements in volunteer concert givers should not be mixed. And the Music in War-Time Committee's hospital parties conducted experiments in giving 'straight' concerts, that is, without a humorous element, as we saw in the Record of the Music in War-Time Committee.<sup>54</sup>

Debates about taste, legitimacy, and validity still run on today. What was significant and unusual in the conditions of wartime were that, among the class of people normally concerned with maintaining the 'sacred sphere of culture,' as Bourdieu describes it,<sup>55</sup> there was a loosening of strictures about the acceptability of certain genres or types of music, or of tastes, more widely expressed. There remained those commentators who throughout the war kept up their emphasis on not diluting culture, refusing to pander to soldiers' taste, or accepting the demand for the easy and the popular items in performance. But there were those who, in the sudden collision of classes at a time of shared national effort, were prepared to set to one side their own views of what was 'good taste' and broaden their appreciation of the value of shared emotional engagement with cultural artefacts, whatever their form may be.

In both instances – those who refused to compromise their tastes and standards, and those who could see beauty in 'Tipperary' and ragtime, where they had not before – we can see that the war was fundamentally responsible for a change in attitudes, however temporary. A colleague of Lena Ashwell, for example, urged Ashwell to recite Shakespeare and not simple poems, because the men had far more serious and better taste than the performers at first realised: 'We all sing rot at first and end by finding that they have better taste [...] the men are hungering for good stuff. It's an

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<sup>53</sup> Ashwell, *Modern Troubadours*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> 'The trial of a 'straight' concert was complete, and the result not to be questioned.' Record of the MIWTC IWM; letter from Rowland Briant, of the Horton (County of London) War Hospital in Epsom, dated 19/1/1918: see chapter six above.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, xxx.



awful injustice to treat them to slop.<sup>56</sup> This recognition by certain performers of an intellectual hunger and serious appreciation amongst a largely working-class audience was only a new discovery for some during the war, of course. I do not mean to suggest that all performers were ignorant of the hunger and intellect for all forms of culture amongst predominantly less well-educated audiences. For many, however, the war was the catalyst that enabled them to see it.

It is also true to say that, for others, the war's effect on attitudes caused a temporary suspension of what they believed constituted culture's sacred sphere. These were the commentators who, in contrast to O'Connor's refusal to give the men 'slop,' as seen above, began to see a value in the most popular of tastes, like Julius Harrison. For these, the war may be seen as having made porous boundaries that before the war were less so. People of all classes may have appreciated all kinds of music before the war, but during the war, there was a commitment to the war effort which united people in unprecedented ways, and this included for some (though not by any means all) a willingness to accept those very elements which, according to Bourdieu's analysis in *Distinction*, were the ones that high culture and those interested in maintaining it, usually rejected – the 'lower, coarse, vulgar, venal.' I do not mean to over-emphasise this point. But the evidence of the published discourse suggests that for some at least, the war years were a time when in the greater cause, attitudes were changed.

#### 7.4 'The Real Music of the Future':<sup>57</sup> the War's Effect on Music

We have seen that the shake-up in society caused by the war had its effect on attitudes towards music of varying sorts. However, we should be cautious of attributing to the war any true diversion of the course of music. The war may have accelerated or accentuated change, but such change was in all probability already imminent, and part of natural development, musical, social or otherwise. For example, the war may have brought new audiences to chamber music, but the development of more public recognition of chamber music in Britain in the early twentieth century, is at least equally due to the consistent sponsorship (beginning pre-war) of prizes for chamber compositions by W. W. Cobbett and the resulting

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<sup>56</sup> From the diary of Madeleine O'Connor, quoted in Ashwell, *Modern Troubadours*, 16-17.

<sup>57</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The War and the Future of Music,' *MT*, 1/9/1914, 571-2.

publicity.<sup>58</sup> This is one way in which the developments during the war expanded upon tendencies that were occurring already. In other ways, the war, though catastrophic for many individuals, did not cause enormous change, as many historians, for example DeGroot, now acknowledge:

The war was insufficiently cataclysmic to destroy [the] fundamentally stable social system. Granted social change did result. The workers' experiences did alter their world view and their position within society. The same could be said for the middle and upper classes. Likewise, the relationship between men and women and the role of the latter within society evolved. But [...] what is striking is how much of pre-war society survived. [...] Just as it (like all wars) provided opportunities for positive change, so too it stimulated conservatism and counter-reaction, rendering progress erratic and limited.<sup>59</sup>

In musical terms, it would be possible to detect, in the overall history of the twentieth century, ways in which the currents of development were either halted, diverted or simply temporarily suspended by the years of the First World War. Reaction to the arrival of jazz in Europe, for example, was undoubtedly influenced by the war: the arrival of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in Britain in 1919 must be seen in the context of the playing in France of James Reese Europe and his Hellfighters.<sup>60</sup> The relation between the reaction amongst conservative musicians to the direct and challenging nature of jazz in the second decade of the twentieth century would reward further study. The scope of the current study, however, precludes any attempt to answer these questions, but an investigation examining the connection of the hopes and intentions of musicians in response to the war which we have examined here, with the developments that actually took place in the post-war period would be an invaluable contribution to scholarship.<sup>61</sup>

I have stated that many commentators at the end of the war looked to the future to make predictions as to what could or should be the likely development in musical life.

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<sup>58</sup> We noted above that Christina Bashford's findings reveal an already thriving tradition of private chamber music making. Bashford, 'Historiography and Invisible Musics.'

<sup>59</sup> DeGroot, *Blighty*, 291.

<sup>60</sup> See Catherine Parsonage, 'A Critical Reassessment of the Reception of Early Jazz in Britain,' *Popular Music* 22/3, 2003, 315-336. Jazz was prefigured by minstrel shows and ragtime in the decades preceding the war, genres in themselves subjects of occasional censure in the specialist musical press; Vaughan Williams's *London Symphony*, for example, was criticised for its 'preposterous ragtime tune': 'Dr Vaughan Williams's symphony,' *MT*, 1/5/1914, 310.

<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that Lewis Foreman connects works being written in the summer of 1914 stylistically with works that came after (Lewis Foreman, 'Battle Songs and Elegies: Elgar, Vaughan Williams and British Music 1914-1918,' in John Norris and Andrew Niell ed., *A Special Flame: The Music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2004), 68. Foreman seems to argue a prescience for the coming changes in society; I would suggest that the stylistic links indicate the natural course of musical development, adding further weight to my suggestion that there were as many continuities as discontinuities evident in the post-war period.

However, the act of attempting to foretell what would happen musically after the war had been part and parcel of musical commentary throughout the war. Ernest Newman, in the first issue of the *Musical Times* published during the war, in September 1914, was already looking far ahead to the end of war and its likely effect:

It is already a commonplace among journalists that whatever be the military result of the present war it is a very different Europe that we shall know when it is over [...] We may depend upon it that this war will have its profound effects on the finer musical minds of the Continent. There will be new horizons to envisage, new hopes and fears and joys and despairs to be sung. Were we writing about the situation as if it were five hundred years behind us, and so a subject merely for unpassioned [*sic*] scrutiny of forces and correlation of causes and effects, instead of something blindingly and terrifyingly near to us, we might perhaps say that some such war was necessary for the re-birth of music. For there is no denying that of late music has lacked truly commanding personalities and really vitalising forces.<sup>62</sup>

Newman noted that France was still recovering from the effects of the Franco-Prussian war, and believed that French composers, in cutting themselves off from the possibility of German influence, were doing themselves a disservice. In a characteristically positive (and non-nationalist) light, he hoped that the present war would not cause similar barriers:

We can only hope that the result of the war will not be a perpetuation of old racial hatred and distrusts, but a new sense of the emotional solidarity of mankind. From that sense alone can the real music of the future be born.<sup>63</sup>

This concern with the future of music after the war, at its beginning in 1914 an unguessable distance away, continued throughout the war. White noted in February 1919's *Music Student* that historians yet to come would find that predictions made about music's future during the war would be falsified.<sup>64</sup> Although this thesis cannot include in its scope an assessment of whether or not the many suggestions regarding future developments in music made during the war were fulfilled, it is instructive to detail what some of these predictions were.

We examined in chapter three the *Musical Herald's* invitation to musicians in 1915 to comment on what they thought would be the effect of the war on music. Post-war speculation as to the future of music was thus part of an existing current of predictions and opinions. Many had high hopes of universal brotherhood and peace.

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Newman, 'The War and the Future of Music,' *MT*, 1/9/1914, 571-2. Newman's contention that the war would be the cause of revitalising music would be a valuable part of a further study into post-war musical history.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 572. This quotation also appears in chapter three.

<sup>64</sup> Robert T. White, 'Retrospect and Prospect,' *MStud*, 1/2/1919, 222.

We who are aware of the later history of the twentieth century, can see the poignancy in the idealism expressed at the time. The hope that war would lead to lasting peace was one formulated very early on in the war, as for example in this comment recorded in the *Musical Herald*:

War is a great calamity for all the arts, and especially for music, since it is the most universal and cosmopolitan of all. In the last century in musical work Europe has not been made up of various countries, but has really been one single country through the regular, almost daily interchange of composers and interpreters. We can only hope that when the war ends we may see the obliteration of animosity due to too great accentuation of national characteristics, and a universal view prevail of the common brotherhood of mankind. In such a way only will the real music of the future originate.<sup>65</sup>

De Lara, in his article *English Music and German Masters* that we have noted previously, made a commonly held assumption that a post-war world would, musically speaking, be a pure, moral and elevated one where the tendencies towards dissonant and immoral music evident in recent compositions before the war – and he cites Strauss's *Salome* as the exemplar – would have no place.

I am of opinion that a great change will come over the spirit of the world after this war, and that the conditions of the musical art will change completely [...] I believe that in the whole of Europe, even in Germany, it will be impossible to find an audience willing to listen any longer to the hysterical ranting of Herod and the disgusting scene where Salome embraces the dead lips of St. John the Baptist. After all the horrors of this war, these things will be set aside. There will be a great thirst for fresh air, for simple truths.<sup>66</sup>

In an article which noted that war would dissolve 'artistic anarchy,' a tendency evident pre-war, C.D. Graham, in a similar reaction to *Salome* as de Lara, described the opera's 'perversities' as 'more fittingly discussed by the mental pathologist than the musician.' Deriding Ornstein and Schönberg as having reduced music to a state of chaos, Graham thought that war would teach discernment of 'the true from the false, the permanent from the ephemeral.'<sup>67</sup> Remarks such as these demonstrate that whilst for some, war had broadened understanding between types of music, and types of person, for others, war reinforced deeply entrenched opinions about musical developments.

Such hopes – and such naïveté – were not uncommonly expressed during the war

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<sup>65</sup> 'Dr H. C. Perrin,' *MH*, 1/11/1914, 422.

<sup>66</sup> Isidore de Lara, 'English Music, German Masters,' *FR*, 1/5/1915, 850.

<sup>67</sup> C. D. Graham, 'Artistic Anarchy and the War,' *MMR*, 1/11/1916, 287. These reactions of de Lara and Graham reveal how, for many conservatively minded musicians and commentators, the war's derailment of modernist and avant-garde tendencies had provided a welcome, if temporary, respite from unwanted developments.

itself. However, it is significant that in the immediate post-war period, these comments longing for the renewal of musical brotherhood and also those which emphasised a need for music to become less decadent, are by and large absent from any of the retrospectives we have examined. This may be because the reality of a long and drawn out war at immense cost of human and other resources, had taken such a toll that a kind of breathing space was needed: the time to readdress concerns for musical unity in Europe was later.

One hope, expressed throughout the war and repeated at its end, was the wish that the wartime flowering of British music would continue, and initiatives such as the foundation of the British Music Society were evidence of that. We saw above that Stanford, like de Lara, considered many twentieth-century German composers (Richard Strauss in particular) to be degenerate. He hoped that the post-war period would continue the emancipation of British music from undue foreign (specifically German) influence: 'The day of British music will be dawning, and the sky will clear.'<sup>68</sup> Despite the continued articulation of the belief that British music would benefit from the war, however, some considered that too much emphasis on the native composer would be detrimental. A January 1919 article in the *Yorkshire Observer*, cited in the *Musical Herald*, argued that any continuing efforts to keep German music out of concert programmes would be counterproductive: 'The proper way is constructive – that of letting English music declare itself on its merits.'<sup>69</sup> It applauded the forthcoming Royal Philharmonic Society season which mixed Delius, Elgar, Parry and Stanford with Wagner and Grieg.

This overview of both the backward- and the forward-looking elements among musical commentators of the immediate post-war period has shown that the effects of the war on musical life were in the forefront of people's minds. As well as breathing an enormous collective sigh of relief, musical commentators were keen both to maintain any gained momentum in the appreciation of music, and to make an active contribution by comment, speculation and collaboration with readers, to benefit musical life in Britain in the future.

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<sup>68</sup> Stanford, 'Music and the War,' 120.

<sup>69</sup> 'News of the Month: London,' *MH*, 1/1/1919, 24.

## 7.5 Conclusions

This study has investigated musical life in Britain through the years of the First World War through the lens of the public discourse about art music. I have chosen to concentrate on broad themes that emerge from this public discourse which, taken together, describe a general picture of the currents of thought publicly expressed in the art musical sphere during the war. Inevitably, the scope of a study of this length, attempting as it does a broad overview of a particular corner of cultural life at such a time, will have limitations. Each of the main five chapters of this thesis would merit a full-length study in itself, but my hope is that this work will contribute to a field currently receiving a good deal of welcome attention from scholars of various disciplines. Situating itself in a current of work which values the social import of music, and alongside recent scholarship which has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the military, political, social and cultural history of the First World War, this research has attempted to shine a new light on the English musical world, centred on London, during the years 1914-1918.

In chapters two and three, I investigated the impact of nationalist ideas on British musical thought and commentary during the war years. Firstly, I addressed the way that musicians struggled to make sense of the ruptured relationship with Germany – long-standing musical friend, ally and teacher – whose dominating influence, nonetheless, many had begun to question long before the war. Secondly, I investigated the converse of the concern over German domination, namely the widespread notion that the war provided a positive opportunity for British music. There were both ideological and practical elements to this discourse: composers were offered new opportunities for exposure of their work in a variety of mediums, and chances were taken to re-inscribe the history of British music in a variety of contexts, showing its development, its renaissance, and its proposed future. This rhetoric of opportunity was repeated by many who voiced hopes that British music had obtained – and would retain – a larger place on the world's musical stage.

Perhaps one of the main ideological victories of music during the First World War

was the sense that art music played a vital role in the well-being of the nation. This was the subject of chapters four and five. The unusual conditions of wartime provided a variety of ways in which music was reassessed, revalued, and then put to practical use. In particular, this study has examined the ways in which music was provided for serving troops, and in that context I have examined how the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu can be mapped on to wartime attitudes. The debates during the war about the taste of soldiers and whether to attempt to change it or supply its demands reveal a great deal about the attitudes of commentators, some of whom were temporarily challenged in their rigid understanding. Others found in the war the occasion for insisting on the purity of certain cultural forms, all the while, in the war's tumult, trying to share these restricted spheres with others. In all cases, commentators saw that music could be applied in ways which they believed made a real, practical difference. It is, of course, doubtful if many outside the musical sphere would have consciously had much awareness of the contention that 'music helped to win the war,' as Percy Scholes put it. However, these tangible uses of music instilled a new confidence in music and musicians, a greater sense of professionalism and of integration with society. As the YMCA publicity put it, music was 'the healer of heroes.'<sup>70</sup> Even those with little direct connection with the musical world would in some sense or other have had contact with music either as serving men or as the families of serving men. It is no exaggeration to say that the profile of music as a tool for the benefit of humanity was higher at this time than at any time before.

The ready use of music for charitable purposes, and the risk of its exploitation in this way, was the subject of chapter six. Initial concerns over the financial difficulties of musicians, themselves suffering a lack of engagements due to the cancellation of events or because they were between contracts due to the summer break and thus found themselves completely adrift in the first months of the new circumstances, who were then asked to donate their services in the cause of others, gradually gave way to a fairer understanding of the importance of paying fees in such cases. In turn, the ability of music to be used for fund-raising had knock-on benefits for musicians. In circumstances where the public could see the benefit of musical entertainment for soldiers, wounded or otherwise, and were prepared to fund it, then musicians themselves were paid to perform, in the process being a part of a charitable activity

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<sup>70</sup> A full-page advertisement for the musical work of the YMCA appeared in various music journals. It may be found in full in the appendices.

but receiving fair wages. The creation of specific schemes designed to employ musicians in these cases – and two such schemes were the focus of the second part of chapter six – meant not only that a great number of musicians were engaged in paid employment, but that music itself remained at centre stage for the benefits it brought to audiences of all kinds. Music thus played a central role in the charitable work of the war, and in turn received further recognition of its value both practically and emotionally.

In this study of musical life during the war, music itself has been the focus only rarely. I have concentrated instead on what was said in the press written by, for and about musicians, and the musically-aware public. This discourse has been all *about* music, but the music itself – the compositions, their composers, the performances – has only been referred to obliquely. This has been quite deliberate. This work is intended both to frame and to provide a context for future studies. It should contribute to a broader understanding of the period and highlight areas worthy of further investigation, but it stands also in its own right as a snapshot, revealing a particular corner of the musical world at a particular time. That corner – the music press – acts in turn as a lens through which to gain a rewarding view of the variety of the wider musical sphere. This in-depth study of the public discourse around music during the First World War makes available to scholars a breadth and variety of materials, considered together for the first time. In drawing out a surprisingly nuanced and positive set of responses of the musical world to the war, it has valuable lessons for all interested in the cultural and wider history of the war, and the ways in which that history still has echoes today.

Whether or not the hopes and discoveries of musicians and musical commentators during the First World War were realised after the war is, as I have noted, a matter for another study. There is, however, no denying the reality of wartime opinion that music held a pre-eminent role, a belief widely expressed in many different public musical spheres at the time. It seems fitting, therefore, to end with one such declaration, written at the very end of 1918, from Lancelot, whose comments have illuminated so much of this study. At the end of the year, he looked both backwards, to the war, and forwards, to the as yet unknown future:



The New Year Babe will soon be born, and never a one has had brighter musical prospects. The art has been tested in the fiery furnace of War, and it has proved its worth, its power to exhilarate and soothe, to stir the noblest sentiments and revive cherished memories, and what is perhaps of even greater value in these days of stress, to vivify the imagination to an extent that dismisses from the mind the small worries that appear so trivial to others and are so big to ourselves. Never have the necessity and value of music been so widely recognised as during the last four years.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Lancelot, 'Matters Musical: Achievements and Prospects,' *Ref*, 29/12/1918, 3.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Material Relating to Chapter Two

*Music Student*, 1 September 1918, 14.

#### **The Bechstein's Bit** by Gladys Edwards

I am only a Piano, and I bear a foreign name;  
But believe me – I am British on the whole,  
For altho' a German made me – that's to say my outer frame,  
'Twas an English maiden gave to me – my soul.

They removed me from the warehouse to a mansion in Mayfair,  
And she dumped me in her room – as is their way:  
I was just a piece of furniture, until she found me there,  
And softly on my notes began to play.

'Twas then I knew I really lived – my heart began to throb,  
I vowed my love to her who had the power  
To draw my wonder from me – to make me laugh and sing and sob  
Beneath her dainty fingers, hour by hour.

I yearned to do her service great – and soon the chance arose,  
For throughout the Empire rant the cry of "War."  
We all must do our Bit said she. "Dear Piano! You must close."  
So I dwelt in tuneless silence yet once more.

Till one morning, through my woodwork, I caught her sorrowing sigh,  
She had sent her Boy to France to do his part –  
Then my lid was slowly lifted up – my keyboard felt she nigh –  
And her tears were dropping down into my heart.

With vibrating strings I waited, till she struck my chords again,  
Then rejoiced! For little smiles began to flit  
Across her sad face – just like April sunshine following rain –  
I felt I'd done a little towards my 'bit.'

And later, when attired in spotless V.A.D.'s array,  
She declared to me, 'Piano! I have heard  
That our wounded need your music, you must come with me to day' –  
To a Convalescent Home I was transferred.

Oh! They thump me, and they bump me, do those cheery wounded Boys,  
And when lacking chairs upon my notes they'll sit,  
But in spite of this, I love them – and she whispers through their noise,  
'My piano – you're accomplishing your "Bit."'

## Appendix B: Material Relating to Chapter Three

*Musical Times* 1 October 1918, 469-70

### Discussion on the Queen's Hall Promenade Programmes

A letter from an anonymous correspondent commenting upon the constitution of these programmes appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on September 7. After some gratuitously rude remarks on Sir Henry Wood the writer says:

What is the matter with the direction of these concerts? They are to start with, almost unique in Europe ... Yet when everyone is talking of keeping the foreign article out these people gaily insist on the same old stuff we have heard for years and years. ... I am getting sick to death of hearing the eternal Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Handel, the same old 'Peer Gynt', Hungarian Rhapsodies, Pathetic Symphony – and I protest vehemently it is playing down to the public. Fancy five new native works, small trifles carefully selected not to disturb the main Tchaikovsky-Rachmaninov-Wood pieces in the programme. If you critics do your duty you will point out that Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Bantock, Gardiner, Holbrooke – even Stanford and Parry I prefer to the everlasting Rachmaninov-Wood business – are real English composers as fine as the formerly overplayed Strauss – who, of course, will be reinstated the day peace is signed!

Mr Robin H Legge, the *Daily Telegraph* critic, adds the following remarks:

With that part of this quotation which implies that far too little is being done here to encourage potential native musical ability, I am in most cordial agreement;

and he gives the following letter he has received from Sir Ernest Palmer, the well-known founder of the Patron's Fund:

These [Promenade] concerts are entirely supported by the British public and British money, and the orchestra is also English. It is, then, indeed strange that so little regard is paid to our own composers and their works. I am quite sure there must be many frequenting them who are patriotic enough to see fair-play and wish for a reasonable supply of English music, but which no one who looks over the programmes can honestly say is forthcoming. A Wagner night, a Russian night, a Symphony night are set forth, and two nights are devoted to or termed 'popular,' whatever that may imply; but these also are mainly devoted to foreign works. Can anyone say a British night would be unreasonable! Surely no difficulty could be suggested in finding good and attractive works, and I venture to say, with as much appreciation as may of the foreign. The policy adopted I fail to understand; it is not patriotic or complimentary or encouraging to our own composers, or instructive, from a national point of view, to the audiences. But whatever the reason may be assigned, I think one night a week ought to be devoted to British works.

On September 14 Messrs. Chappell & Co., the proprietors of Queen's Hall, and of the orchestra, made the following spirited rejoinder:

In reply to Mr Legge's criticism of the Promenade programmes, the moment we are convinced by receipts that the public prefer Mr Joseph Holbrooke's music to that of Beethoven, or Mr Granville Bantock's compositions to those of Tchaikovsky, we are perfectly prepared radically to alter the character of the Queen's Hall programmes.

Mr. Legge asks who is responsible for the drawing up of these programmes. They are drawn up by Mr Robert Newman, whose long experience thoroughly qualifies him for the task. Mr Newman has general instructions from us to draw up the programmes upon the most popular lines, and they are finally submitted to us for our approval.

The musical public, which quite well knows what it wants, will not be dictated to by us, or even by eminent musical critic. Sir Henry Wood every season submits to us a large number of novelties, including English works. We have to point out to Sir Henry Wood that novelties, particularly British ones, do not attract, and that as, more particularly during such a war as this, it costs thousands of pounds to run orchestral concerts, it is not possible, unless you are a millionaire, to exploit novelties and at the same time find the money to pay your artists.

We would remind Mr Legge that there are over sixty orchestral works by English composers in this season's programmes, in spite of the melancholy fact that Sir Edward Elgar, and in another school, Edward German, are the only two English composers whose orchestral works are any attraction.

Mr Legge's anonymous correspondent would have carried more weight had he had the courage to sign his name to his thoroughly unjustifiable attack upon Sir Henry Wood. Had he done so, he would have not been under the imputation of being a dull composer whose claim to be included in the Promenade programmes had regretfully to be rejected.

Sir Ernest Palmer's generous contributions in aid of British modern music are well known. May we remind him, however, of certain endowment concerts of his, expressly organised some years ago to introduce new English works, which concerts, if we remember rightly, were given at Queen's Hall and elsewhere? He will not have forgotten that these concerts had to be discontinued, owing to the total lack of public support.

If Sir Ernest Palmer thinks that times have changed, we would suggest that he should lease from us at cost price Queen's Hall, the Queen's Hall Orchestra, and the incidental expenses, and experiment upon a week of programmes of modern British music at the Promenade Concerts. We would willingly see him successful. We, as English publishers, have much more to gain by exploiting copyright works by modern composers rather than non-copyright works by the dead masters. Unfortunately, as we said before, the obstinate British public, who will not be dictated to, still stand in the way. They still prefer Beethoven to Joseph Holbrooke, and Tchaikovsky to Villiers Stanford and Granville Bantock.

The above discussion gives special point to a contribution made by Sir Henry Wood to the *Sunday Telegram* of August 18. The following extracts show that Sir Henry has a very high opinion of living British composers:



I must apologise by starting off with a comment on the oft-made assertion that the English – ought I to say the British? – are not a musical people. It is really time it was put on the shelf, carefully covered over, and forgotten. Unfortunately, there seems to be a good deal of life in that particular old dog yet, and so I welcome the opportunity of hastening the date of its anxiously awaited demise.

Certainly, in so far as orchestral music is concerned, it is further removed from the truth than the average enemy official communiqué. No people – and I speak from personal experience, as I have had the privilege and pleasure of conducting orchestras in many lands – have a keener and finer appreciation than our own. And in our own land I take the audiences at the Proms, as audience of a popular type for the highest and best music that cannot be matched anywhere....

I cannot agree that the provinces are more musical than London, despite the high authorities who have fathered the statement. I have had a good deal of provincial experience in my time, and not only is the more advanced music less appreciated, but there is not the same readiness to try and enter into the spirit of novelties. It was a Prom. audience that listened to the first performance of Debussy's 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune,' and I shall never forget my own delight at their intelligent and emotional perception of its beauty...

All the great Continental names in music belong to the past generation. I could mention at least six English composers of to-day who write for orchestra whose work cannot be touched by any Continental contemporaries. And I attribute this glorious outlook for our future – in part, at least – the decay of the Festival, with its passion for the academic. Thank goodness, both in practice and in teaching, the academic is being relegated to its proper place.

British works have always had their chance at the Proms., as items of an ordinary programme without too much preliminary fanfare. I believe concerts advertised 'All British' a mistake. Everyone acquainted with the business side of concert-giving – and it cannot be dismissed contemptuously – will appreciate why. A considerable proportion of the items of every concert must be known and liked by the public. They will pay to come and hear them, and may learn to like, and pay for, the new-comers.

All discussion of this everlasting topic come round to the conclusion that the average British concert-goer does not care a pin who composes the music, so long as it is found attractive to him. British, conductors and publishers cannot sweep this tide away.

## Appendix C: Material Relating to Chapter Five

*Musical News* 25 December 1915, 603-4

'The Autobiography of a Mouth Organ' Edited by George E Dunn.

Perchance you may marvel at the effrontery of a humble little instrument like me in putting itself forward in a musical journal. But you are mistaken in imagining that I am blushing to find myself in print. True, I am but a poor old mouth-organ, suffering from internal disease, and on the verge of the grave. But my wounds are honourable ones, and I look upon my past career with some degree of pardonable pride. I have had an exciting life, have travelled a great deal, and seen much, and have had three narrow escapes from death – once through starvation, once through suffocation, and once – well, that will come at the end of my story.

The only circumstance of my life of which I feel ashamed is that of my birth, but I flatter myself that I have been able to live that down. I was born in Berlin, and all through life I have been cursed with the birth-mark, 'Made in Germany.' That I have succeeded in getting the better of my natal brand is a tribute, I think, to my strength of character and my ceaseless endeavours to benefit my masters, of whom I have had two. I believe that my original stigma has been completely forgotten, and it is not everyone who can live down a thing like that. By dint of conscientious servitude my shady parentage has been condoned. Happy is he who can rise superior to the unfortunate circumstances of his manufacture! But I was naturalised by purchase when quite young, and have remained a true and faithful partisan of the land of my adoption every since.

I was born, then, in Germany, and spent the first few months of my existence on the shelf, in the stock-room of Herr Weniburgstein. But not for long did I remain in the domicile of that Semitic Teuton. One day, along with a number of my half-brothers, I was put into a packing case and remained oblivious as to my environments until violent nausea told me all too plainly that I was on board ship. So ill was I that I became semi-conscious, and knew nothing more until I found myself gazing out of the show-window of a Birmingham toy-seller, where I remained for many days. Oh, the agony of it! It was here that I nearly lost my life for the first time. You must know that we mouth-organs require air for our good. We can go for a long- time without it, like a frog, but sooner or later, if our organs are not inflated, we die. We contract rheumatism and rustification of the brain, and pop off. But, having no personal means of feeding ourselves, we depend upon the kind office of human being to fill our lungs with air-food.

My vital organs were getting so stiff and rusty from non usage and lack of food that I did not think I should last out the day. Then Little Master saved the situation and me. I have already mentioned that I have had two masters; the first I called Little Master, the second Big Master. The former walked into the shop and, much to my relief, I was handed over to him. Happily for me, he was a choirboy of eleven years old. Had he been a grown up, I should probably have been wrapped in paper and not opened and used for some time, and it would have been too late. But Little Master breathed the precious air into my lungs almost before he had left the shop, and I knew that my life was preserved for a month at least.

I liked Little Master. We were great friends, and he used to feed me constantly, sometimes almost to satiety. And what fun we had! Once, we were both punished, and I am proud to think that I bore mine like – a mouth-organ, while he bore his like a little man. It was at choir practice, when something seemed to tell that I required feeding. Feeding mouth-organs is, I understand, not permitted at choir practices. But Little Master, in his praiseworthy desire to give me sustenance, did not bother about that. So, after the Psalms, he fed me, and, clever fellow that I am, I thanked him by giving a very tolerable imitation of the last chant. The result was that Little Master was fined sixpence, while I was sent to prison. I remained for a month in the choirmaster's desk, without light or air, and in solitary confinement. I nearly died, but I was proud to think that Little Master thought so much of me that he was willing to pay exactly half my face-value in order to feed me. At the end of that terrible four weeks, the choirmaster released me and restored me.

Time went on, and then, one day, I heard about a Great War which was being waged between the country of my adoption and that of my birth. No need to say on which side my sympathies lay. I longed to do something to help in the grand cause, and, had I been able of myself, I should have inflated my lungs with patriotism. Much to my surprise, my opportunity came. Little Master said to me one morning, 'It's no good, old chap, you've got to go. I ain't got no money to send the Tommies, but there's you. You must do your bit.' He packed me up and I saw his eyes glisten a little. I never thought Little Master was so fond of me.

To cut a long story short, I travelled to a place called *Musical News Office*, and from thence I was sent to a depot, where I met a lot of fellow-recruits. Soon we were shipped across the Channel and disembarked and sent to the base. A few days later I was introduced to Big Master. I was pretty done up by then, I can tell you, for I had had no air-food for over a fortnight, so I don't suppose I looked my best. But he looked fine, a great big chap with a bronzed face, which I don't suppose he every acquired at his native home – Shadwell. But he seemed pleased with me, as he remarked to the corporal who introduced us, 'Blimey, two-stripes, 'e's a bit of awl rite, not 'arf,' which I understand to be an expression of approval.

We did a lot of hard work together, on what they called route marches ('rowt marches' is the correct term in the Service.) He taught me all sorts of new songs, from 'God save the King' to 'Hold your hand out, naughty boy.' Indeed, my repertoire was peculiar and extensive, and then, when we got back, we used to work harder than ever in our billets, which was anything from a peasant's cottage to a disused pig-stye.

Then we were sent up to the firing line, and I had my second narrow escape. We had been in a trench all day, where he kept me strangely quiet, and then there took place what is known as a charge in close column. I am afraid Big Master forgot all about me. Anyhow, he tripped on something, fell head over heels, and I slipped out of his breast pocket. Had he been at the back, it might have been all right, but somehow Big Master always seemed to lead the way, and dozens of his comrades came up from behind and trampled me in the mud. I was almost suffocated with the horrid slime, and was on the point of expiring when an R.A.M.C. man stooped down and spotted me. Happily, there were very few casualties, and he was searching over the now deserted field to see if there were any stray comrades overlooked. Anyhow, he picked me up, cleaned the mud off and put me in his pocket. I never thought I should see Big Master again, but the next morning I was passed from hand to hand

until that Corporal got hold of me. He recognised me by a little scratch Big Master had made on me with his trenching tool. 'That's Bill Smith,' he exclaimed, and soon I was back in Big Master's pocket. How he fed me the same evening!

Then came my greatest adventure. Big Master took me up a tree! He was an exceptionally good marksman, and had been told off for sniping exercise. He potted away in high glee until there was a nasty 'ping' and he dropped off the bough like a shot sparrow. I was in his left breast pocket and received the full shock of the bullet. My poor old inside was smashed to bits, and I knew no more.

When I recovered consciousness, I found myself a perfect wreck. My air apparatus was hopelessly damaged, and never again would Big Master feed me. He was sitting up in bed gazing at me with admiration. 'Good old mouthie,' he said; 'you've been a pal.' I heard afterwards from the nurse that the bullet which passed through deflected in its course, and instead of penetrating Big Master's heart had gone up through his shoulder. We were in the base for only three days (they never keep you there longer than that unless it is a very serious case), and off we were shipped to the old country, to a hospital in the Midlands. Big Master insisted on keeping me by his side – 'his good old life-preserver,' he called me. He soon got all right, except that his career in the Army was over. His left arm was useless, and he got his discharge. Now he is back again minding his mother's paper shop in Shadwell.

And where do you think I am living now? Big Master has had a special home built for me – a little glass case in the best sitting room on the first floor. In front of is a brass table with these words: – 'This little mouthie saved my life in Flanders, October 15, 1915.' I regard it as the mouth-organ's D.C.M.

Well, I am about used up now. With no means of being fed, I cannot live more than a few months. Rust and dirt will soon bring me to the grave, but I shall spend my declining days in the happy reflection that I have done my bit.

And now, all you fellow mouth-organs, hurry up and do your duty. Roll up in your hundreds to *Musical News* Office and be attested. You don't cost much. They pay a shilling for you when you join, which is one and ninepence cheaper than a Tommy, and there are no commissariat or kit expenses. You only want a little breath occasionally to keep you going, and the Tommies will see to that. I give you my word that you will enjoy the route marches and the evening concerts, with dozens of gallant lads joining in the chorus.

*Daily Telegraph* Saturday October 30 1915, 13

'Music at the Front' by Robin H Legge

There has been recently a good deal of talk, among those who sit at home at ease, about 'keeping the musical flag flying', 'business as usual' and all the rest of it. Concerts are comparatively many and comparatively good in the comfortable Queen's Hall, Aeolian Hall, and the same dear old audiences utter the same time-honoured diatribes against the programmes, whatsoever their constituent elements, now and then a louder voice than the rest howling against the 'desecration' implied by the performance of a Bach cantata or a Wagner overture. I wonder if the average member of these audiences gives a thought to the men, music-lovers every man of them, who really are keeping the flag flying, to the music which means so much to

them, so much more than to the average man or woman entrenched in a comfortable stall in a central-heated concert-hall! I know that musicians themselves bear these fine fellows in mind, for Miss Lena Ashwell tells me that from the first she has had no difficulty in collecting singers and instrumentalists for her innumerable concert parties which are doing and have done so much for the soldiery at the front. So it is not the musicians themselves to whom this is addressed, but their so-called patrons, the public. Therefore it is your money, not your voice, that is the crying need just now. The fact is that Miss Lena Ashwell's parties, of which I shall give a few details in a moment, have had an enormous success, a success far greater than you can realise from the scanty accounts that occasionally appear in the Press, and now has come the time when funds are low, and the very existence of the parties is in jeopardy. ...

### True Music-Lovers

In order the better to inform myself at first hand as to the utility of these concert parties, I have been at the pains of reading a huge mass of letters apropos from soldiers of every degree in France, and I can assure you whom it may concern that not until I had read these letters had I more than an idea of the extent of the appreciation of music that lies deep down in the breast of Tommy Atkins. Esq. 'We all agree that we would willingly go back to the trenches and fight all the better for the happy remembrance of your and your concert party,' wrote one stalwart, who, besides being badly wounded, had his feet frost-bitten. An officer in charge of a camp where had been a concert wrote: 'They (the men) have been through hell, and, poor chaps, are soon to undergo it again, and these glimpses of civilisation have had the most ennobling effects on them, and seem entirely to take them out of their drab surroundings here.'

Tommy Atkins, 'that strange soul who mystifies both friends and enemies by charging machine-guns shouting, "Front rows, sixpence each,"' as Miss Ashwell tells us, is a keen lover of music. At Havre none other than Johann Sebastian Bach was in chief demand, a fact that may appeal to those good folk who are trying to keep his music out of our programmes just now! It was with a view of experimenting, as it were, upon T. A.'s love of music that Miss Ashwell first organised a concert party to go to France about nine months ago. This party was financed privately, and its efforts were crowned, it is fair to state, with quite undreamed of success: the soldiers longed for the cheering music they love, and everywhere the party went they were welcome by all and sundry, from the various C.O.'s to the humblest men at arms. Of course, matters could not be allowed to rest there, with the one experiment, and that a highly successful one. So Miss Ashwell and the ladies' committee of the Young Men's Christian Association set to work to organise more and more parties and to collect funds for sending them to France, so that the best possible value might be obtained. So far success has followed success, and I repeat even greater successes are inevitable if only you who have to spare will send you cheques.

### The Organisation

Two concert parties are continually at work in France, where two 'routes' or 'concert tours' have been arranged. Of these one is of considerable length, so that the complete tour occupies a full month in the circuit of six base camps; the other tour is shorter and occupies three weeks only. Parties Nos. 14 and 15 are just on the point of returning home, while Nos. 16 and 17 follow immediately on their return, so that T.A., if things go well with the finance, will never been without the pleasure and

consolation of his music. Of course, he should not, and need not be. It must not be thought that it is easy work, this concert touring. Over there, there are no Pullman cars, dining cars, sleeping cards, but there is abundance of mud! The luxury you will find in Queen's Hall, Langham-place, not in the King's Hall anywhere in France where men do congregate. The prima donna of the party is not expected to appear in £200,000 worth of diamonds, real or otherwise, though she may have on occasion to wear boots large enough to smuggle that amount of precious stones, because, as I say, there is mud, and much of it, over there in the neighbourhood of the 'concert-rooms.' Nor, for much the same reason, need the most fashionable tenor take his claque with him. He will find that ready to greet him with an enthusiasm not often heard in halls were audiences, be they never so enthusiastic, fear to split their gloves. Not, emphatically, it is no life of luxury and ease, that of these concert parties.

## Results

Of one party, Miss Ashwell gives these details as a sample: In twenty-four days, it gave nineteen hospital and no less than forty-three camp concerts, or sixty-two in all, and meanwhile there is a good deal of travelling to be done from one Y.M.C.A hut to the next. Now, when you come to think of it, it is not a very costly affair for you who have a few pounds to spare. For it is calculated that about £2 will cover all the expenses of each concert. Mr. Theodore Flint, a well-known accompanist in London concert-rooms, is a kind of permanent institution in France, where he accompanied parties is if they were the very breath of life to him, as not doubt just now they are. He was the accompanist, which means also pianist, on the tour mentioned above, and he has calculated that on an average he plays about fifty songs per day, so that on this tour he played, roughly, 3,100 songs, and as this is his eighth party he has played nearly 25,000 songs and pieces.

But is it not worth it? Hard, strenuous work it may be, and is. But for whom is it undertaken? Think and picture to yourselves the thousands and thousands of men who are making no pretence, and not talking of 'keeping the flag flying' but are doing it, day after day, week after week, month after month. What kind of consolation or pleasure can they get out of a life that at best is a mere existence, drab, dirty, dangerous without compare, but utterly unselfish? These parties are as a breath from a new heaven to them. Tommy Atkins, Esq., no doubt loves such music as was forthcoming the other day from the extempore band of a cardboard trombone, a comb with its paper equipment, and a petrol tin, or such as is produced from the mouth organ so much in demand, and upon which many soldiers have become as expert as Paderewski upon the pianoforte. But all this is extraneous. The better the music and the better the performance the more it is enjoyed – a further proof of my own oft-repeated dictum that sheer love and appreciation of the best in music is not an attribute peculiar to a class. Everyone with whom I have talked tells me that the classical instrumental solo, be it for violoncello or violin, is always one of the most popular numbers in each programme, while when the Westminster Glee Singers visited the huts, the King's Halls as I call them, in August last, they aroused the most intense enthusiasm by their singing of 'Drink to me only with thine eyes,' 'The Keys of Heaven,' and so on, and Miss Lena Ashwell herself invariably brought down the house by her recitation of Elizabethan sonnets and poems.

Pay Here!

Once more I would urge all to help in this fine cause. A distinguished medical man at the front has said that these concerts are worth more to the men than half-a-dozen nerve specialists, while the opinion has been professionally expressed that 'money for this purpose is just as usefully expended as if it were spent on splints and bandages, for diversion and amusement are valuable aids to recovery from bodily ills. It would probably be true to say that these concert parties have actually saved lives. Unquestionably they have brightened those of thousands of our soldiers just when they most needed diversion.'

Two pounds a concert! It is not much to ask for, surely! Need one say more? Don't be absent-minded beggars – Do pay, pay, pay!

## Appendix D: Material Relating to Chapter Six

'Record of the Music in War Time Committee 1914-1920' by Annette Hullah

Women at Work Collection, Imperial War Museum, London

Document Reference: B.O.7 2/4 (also published in sections over several issues of the *Musical News* between August and September 1920).

The Music in War Time Committee was formed in the first instance to try to save music from the paralysis war brought to its sister arts, and to keep it ready to serve when it should be wanted again.

In September, 1914, Mr. H C Colles – the first to perceive this might happen very soon – wrote to four of his friends and asked them to come and talk things over, and at Mr. W. W. Cobbett's house a scheme was evolved whereby they should become guardians of song, as it were, till the exceptional condition of the moment was over. They gathered in an informal group at once. Mr Cobbett offered his house for an office, and himself as Secretary and Treasurer. Mr. Colles undertook propaganda, Dr Vaughan Williams agreed to compile a register of individuals and societies requiring support, Dr Walford Davies to keep up interest in part-singing by creating a sample choir to go round the camps; Mr Fox-Strangeways came in as temporary Chairman, and Dr. McNaught as practical adviser.

The first thing they strove for was a fund. Mr. Cobbett headed a private appeal with a large contribution and they began to use it at once. No sooner was it spread abroad that this small society was making it their business to try to help to keep the art of music alive, than letters poured in from everywhere. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Frederick Bridge, Mr Landon Ronald, Sir Ernest Palmer, Mr Granville Bantock, and other prominent musicians sought out facts and sent them in. A subscription list was opened, and with its results, and a £50 grant from the Patron's Fund, the proceeds of concerts given by Miss Winifred Christie, Mr Howard Jones, Miss Edith Kirkwood and a donation from the National Relief Fund, the capital grew encouragingly fast.

Choral and Orchestral Societies came in for the first share, followed by Instrumental Quartets. South Place, St Chad's Choral Union, the Woking, Bath, and Skipton Orchestral Societies, the King Cole Chamber Music Club, Northumbrian and Reading Chamber Music Societies and a Women Composers' Concert were among the early claimants for a contribution. Some associations asked for small grants, others for artists to replace men gone to the front, or for guarantees against loss. The first individual donation went to a little party who gave their services in Captain Miller's Camp Entertainments more often than they could rightly afford; next to teachers who had lost their pupils; then to composers and executants whose concerts had been cancelled on the outbreak of war. So much money went to support other people's ventures little was left for their own, so the concert record at this time was very small. But in three weeks the first intention of helping art sank under the more urgent one of helping artists, and with the change came the necessity of dinging concert engagements for themselves. Such number flocked to Dr Vaughan Williams in search of advice that his register was filled to overflowing and no longer able to tackle it single-handed, the Committee decided to extend their circle and invite Miss Mary Paget and Miss Annette Hullah (who had just combined forces) to join in.



Miss Paget's interest till now had been centred on Factory Girls' Clubs and Happy Evenings started for the mothers and wives of soldiers and sailors, and to these and the Tipperary League of Honour and Union Jack groups she was contributing music to help them through the anxious time of waiting.

Miss Hullah's chief concern was to provide soldiers themselves with distraction, for at the beginning no provision was made to this by the authorities either at home or abroad. Also along with independent efforts, and in order to find work for artists, she had begun to organise a musical section for the Women's Emergency Corps Art Employment Bureau, the materials for which were presently transferred to the Music in War Time Committee.

In November these two workers came in touch, and, feeling they could do more in co-operation than alone, made a common register and united funds. There was some difficulty at first in finding enough engagements to go round, partly because finances were limited, partly because it took so long to make arrangements with camps. These were springing up everywhere, but many Commanding Officers were alarmed at the idea of civilian concerts for their men, and some directly opposed them as an effeminate invasion, sentimental and unnecessary. Hospitals began to fill up, but they, too, in the early days, were chary of introducing music as an addition to treatment, so precious days were wasted awaiting permission. Once obtained, however, the soldiers, together with their relations in the new social clubs, made so large an audience to cater for that the two directors were hard put to it to find money for the task. Collection teas were a fertile source of income, appeals to musical friends, and most of all schools. The happy suggestion of Miss Calendar, a Secondary School teacher, this was later to prove a mine of wealth, and was further valuable in that it offered an opportunity of doing serious music along with the lighter programmes popular in club and camp. Out of funds resulting, 88 concerts were arranged during the partnership.

At the end of the month Miss Hullah and Miss Paget became the two chief organisers of the Music in War Time committee, added their artists to the register, and balance to the bank.

By this time the Committee had over £800 in hand, and opportunities for using double that amount. The labour was too great for the Secretary and Treasurer – Mr Cobbett – to carry on without clerical help, so Miss Elsie Newmarch was asked to become working secretary. Distress in these few weeks had increased so rapidly that the organisers had to hold auditions every day, and most mornings were spent by Miss Hullah, Miss Paget, Dr Vaughan Williams, and Mr Collett in separating the fit from the unfit, and in persuading the latter to seek other work. Funds ran out as fast as they came in, for although the Committee tried to reserve them exclusively for the better musicians, it was simply impossible to refuse help to a good worker, or to anyone with dependents, who really needed it. Dr McNaught advised a meeting at Novello's, to which prominent musicians should be invited, and a definite policy in this and other matters adopted. This meeting was held early in December, and a general Council formed, and an Executive Committee. Sir Hubert Parry was elected Chairman, Dr. McNaught Vice-Chairman. Mr Barkworth became Hon. Secretary, Mr. Cobbett remained Treasurer, Dr Vaughan Williams, Miss Hullah and Miss Paget continued as concert organisers. Mr Colles interviewed artists coming for financial relief, and Mr O'Neill advised on orchestral matters. Most of the leaders in the musical world agreed to preside over the general committee and Mr Louis Godfrey, Mr Harold Darke, and Mr. Stanley Roper rendered practical service as well.

Meantime, another society was trying to solve the problem of distress. The Professional Classes War Relief Council was created to help professional people who had been thrown out of work by the war to find employment. Many applications from musicians had come in, but so far they had set up no music section, and finding the aims of Music in War Time to be in one direction the same as their own, they invited this Committee to become that section. The invitation was accepted on condition they remained completely independent in purely musical matters; but all work connected with distress that was relieved from the common funds to be referred to the Council, and this part of the scheme limited to British-born subjects.

The amalgamation took place January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915, at 13, Prince's Gate, the house kindly lent by Mr. Pierpoint Morgan for the duration of the war.

The working committee now included Sir Homewood Crawford, Sir John McClure, Dr. West, and Major Darwin, with Mrs. Gotto, the Council's Hon. Secretary. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Walter Parratt, Mr. Landon Ronald, Sir Villiers Stanford [sic], Sir Henry Wood, Sir Edward Elgar, and Sir Frederick Bridge lent their names shortly after.

In February, Mr. Allen Gill was co-opted to deal with distress among music teachers, and Miss Mathilde Verne to find employment for them. Miss Grace Thynne and Mr. Harold Darke helped with surplus concerts in hospitals and camps.

The Music in War Time Committee was able now to carry out plans on a much larger scale. The Professional Classes War Relief Council were spending about £500 a week in providing work for professional people, and the musicians' share of this was at the disposal of the musical section. They had brought in about £300 as their own contribution to the common fund, and this together with the grants available by the amalgamation immediately widened the range of their activities.

At the end of January, Mr. Barkworth took up other war work, but the committee were fortunate in securing Mr. W.G. Rothery's services as Secretary, and early next month those of his assistants Miss Bill and Miss Tomlins. They had also the clerical staff of the Council within call, an office and a telephone.

Not much propaganda was undertaken at the outset, but leaflets were printed and distributed in meetings and by letter, to awake people to the distressful conditions of things among musicians. The appeals so made, together with social entertainments and concerts given by well known artists, resulted in a considerable addition to both incomes, for the Committee were happy in being able by their music to advertise not only their own particular section of the work, but incidentally that of the whole Society, and so benefit the Council as well as themselves.

As the knowledge of their work spread, auditions in private houses soon became impossible owing to the number anxious to be seen and heard, and when on one occasion at Miss Paget's house every sitting room was occupied by artists or Committee, and even the spare bedroom and bathroom contained two people conferring on the musical history of one of them, it was time to find a permanent home. Sir Hubert Parry, helpful as usual, solved the problem by offering hospitality at the Royal College. Here, till the end of 1919, Miss Hullah, Miss Paget, and Mr. Rothery spent a long morning every week. Between 30 and 40 people attended each time. Of these, nine-tenths were put in touch with a more suitable occupation than music. Some really talented, but not strong enough for the strenuous life of a concert giver, were offered medical treatment, holidays, clothes, education for their children,

teaching, subsidised by the council, grants, loans, or other props by which the society tried to lighten the burdens of war. Under a thorough sifting process concert work was kept as far as possible for really good artists, but a certain proportion of mediocrity was allowed to leak through in the hope it might justify itself with experience. It was satisfactory to note this did happen sometimes. For these people, poorly equipped in music, were rich in sympathy and quick to learn. They listened to good account, and in several cases asked for lessons from their fellow performers. The audiences also were varied enough to absorb several different grades of artist, and if the lower could satisfy any of these it was felt they had the right to try. Everyone had a chance, but unless they made good their names were taken off the concert register and other assistance found, for no lasting advantage could be derived from encouraging the unfit.

Work was distributed on a definite plan. Good artists entirely dependent on their music came first; a limit to the yearly income they drew from Council funds assigned to each. Those partly dependent came next, and finally the ones who needed merely a little help now and then to tide them over a difficult time. As well, a small number were chosen for their gifts, irrespective of income, in order to keep the musical standard at a high level.

Sorting involved a good deal of inquiry. There were artists who held themselves eligible for the Committee's concerts while their incomes were still above the minimum decreed, and applied for help on a wrong estimate. Others of a more independent outlook asked for too small a share and struggled on too long. Again, there were amateurs out for a good time, and pupils who regarded a soldier's audience as fair game for their own development. All these had to be shown the error of their ways.

Wonderful were the things people asked for. One musician wanted an operatic tour subsidised, another a festival season, a third a series of symphony concerts, a composer asked to have his works published, a concert-giver her debts paid – on all sides they were beset by the unsuccessful or ambitious, quite oblivious of the object they were known to have in view.

Before conscription came in the shirker was another pitfall, and a circular had to be drawn up making military service indispensable to the able-bodied, and war service of some kind for everyone. To settle these vexed questions a sub-committee of Mr. Colles, Mr. Rothery, Miss Paget and Miss Hullah was appointed, and the register regularly revised and kept up to date.

The work was particularly heavy in 1915, because, anxious that every available penny should be spent on the end in view, they were unwilling to use more clerical help than was absolutely necessary. In the spring, however, Miss Paget and Miss Hullah were obliged to give some of the correspondence to a secretary – Miss Seys – who divided four morning a week between them for two years. Even then proceedings began with the first post and ended with the last, because answers to engagements and telegrams about concerts came at any time of day and had to be attended to on the post. Both organisers finding it better for this reason to work at home, and neither possessing a telephone, a large part of their time was spent in the post-office. Artists had a way of getting ill at the last moment, or asking to be let off a concert because someone else offered a higher fee, and as the double nature of the Society's purpose made it impossible to refuse this, a substitute had to be found in a hurry. Camp leaders regarded the Committee as a kind of concert emporium where

they could get a party at an hour's notice, especially on Bank Holidays, when telegrams and transport were a difficulty. One Christmas every artist, out of a list of over 250, was engaged either at one of Music in War Time's eleven concerts on that day, or in some other way. At the office Mr. Rothery and Miss Tomlins were often to be found long after working hours anxiously telephoning to fill in a gap for some camp whose concert party had failed them at the last moment. Arrangements made, the concerts themselves followed.

The two organisers made a point of personally attending their own entertainments wherever possible. This was found wise for several reasons. One because the more sensitive artists often did badly at audition and could not be accurately placed till they were heard from the platform; another because the sense of duty was undeveloped in some, and these appeared unconscious of the great debt they owed the soldiers. In early days tales were told of tired singers who refused an encore, of others who spoilt the sequence of the programme by insisting on doing their two turns together and slipping away before half the concert was over. Some sang dismal songs to a hospital ward obviously in need of a cheerful noise, and a few mistook vulgarity for wit. The presence of someone in authority swept away these dilemmas, so if for any reason the organisers could not be there a reliable member of the party was made manager and lawgiver instead. Those entrusted with the responsibility were loyal and untiring from start to finish. Yet the post was by no means always an easy one. Concert parties in England never went through such experiences as those in France, but they had their trials. Journeys to country camps often included a transport breakdown, involving long, muddy walks, wet feet, hurried meals – if any – and missing the last tube home. In the beginning it was no great surprise to find a battalion had left in the morning, or another party was already in possession of the stage. Once from an icy cold village drill-hall the entire audience was absent, having migrated to the inn next door – to get warm. Rainy evenings saw a hut full of hot damp khaki and thick with smoke, and probably a roof so leaky that people took it in turns to hold an umbrella over the accompanist. Of the pianos no one can speak in cold blood. A late air raid meant house in a dark station without a light or heat, with mental uneasiness thrown in. A complete chronicle could tell of many a frightened party who sang and played in a pitch-dark recreation room or ward full of neurasthenic cases, the pianist fumbling about by instinct and the entertainer still funny by force of habit, all of them aware of the guns outside and ominous splatter on the roof above, but determined to do their best whatever happened. Six nights a week – while on tour – tested the endurance pretty thoroughly, but nearly all carried on straight through the war, always steady, always cheerful, right to the end.

Hospital concerts were always seasoned with anxiety, more or less, especially for those managers who had to tune the party up to the right note, and hold it there, and see that the quality and quantity of the entertainment were just right. They must be expert in shielding the pianist from an opening piece pressed on them by singers who were afraid to begin, in urging suitable songs, hiding unwieldy solos when the violinist was not looking, reminding the humorist to talk slowly, preventing the inappropriate (to a certainty lurking in somebody's case) from springing out behind their backs. Also they must be able to sense the men's mood, and give a programme that so completely held attention – everything else was forgotten. In shell-shock cases the brain rifts made by gun explosions are most easily smoothed out by contrasting sounds, and early in the war music came to be regarded as the best of these. The action in this case being physical, it did not matter whether the patient was musical or not. Sir Frederick Mott, of the Maudsley Hospital, who made a special study of this

subject, found that, provided no organic trouble was present, shell shocked men could sing where they could not speak, and if words came with a tune, soon after they came without it.

The vocal classes started there produced most satisfactory results. Sir Bruce Porter, of the Third London General, one of the first to discover the psychological value of music for his hospital, expressed his opinion in the following letter:-

3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital  
Wandsworth S W 18  
March 29<sup>th</sup> 1917

My Dear Miss Hullah,

I hope that nothing will stop your concert parties coming here while the war is on.

As I live among my patients, I can speak with some authority as to the effect of these concerts on the sick and wounded. The good done to patients by getting away from the atmosphere of the ward is an actual value in the saving of patients. The opinion of my staff and myself is that these entertainments reduce the period of illness by an average of at least 5 days, and in a hospital of 2,000 beds that means 10,000 days. If the duration of a patient's stay averages 30 days, the concert-room entertainments are equal in value to 300 beds in a large hospital like this. In days gone by no provision was made for this form of treatment, but, as I have said, in my opinion it is actual medical treatment.

It is a great comfort to me to be able to count on your concert week by week, and I hope you will be able to continue for the duration of the war.

Yours sincerely (Signed) H.E. Bruce Porter, Col. Commdg. 3<sup>rd</sup> Lon. Gen. Hosp.

Concerts in hospitals were useful to the patients in bed as well as those patients in the recreation room, for they kept the too cheerful element out of the wards for a couple of hours and gave the bad cases a chance to be quiet. It was good for the staff, too, to be able to turn their thoughts to outside things for a time, and mind and body profited by the rest.

From Netley, Colonel Cook wrote :- 'You have given us a week's pleasure that was almost as good as a holiday.'

Programmes varied. Usually they were carried through by a pianist, violinist, or 'cellist, two singers and a humorists. An instrumental quartet was appreciated in small doses, vocal duets in large ones: unaccompanied part-songs and choirs were quite successful. Reciters who wallowed in tragedy were a source of danger, but amusing stories most popular; the 'funny man,' conjuror, or ventriloquist, indispensable. Provided everyone had something he liked, the soldiers were always satisfied. One rule held good – any kind of music was acceptable if well given and with sympathy, and the artist quite clear about what he had to say. If he lacked conviction, boredom was at once apparent to a quick eye, and the attention of the audience began to wander. Men in hospital had perfect manners in the concert room and greeted everything given to them in good faith and with courtesy; but those in camp, not yet softened by the suffering of war, expressed their opinion at once, and with vigour, and the inefficient was made known to himself without delay. In the first three months of the war no concert party could be trusted alone with a programme.

So rooted was the idea that new music was unpopular with the soldiers, the same songs turned up every time. A good deal of persuasion with more than a flavouring of firmness was necessary to mark out fresh lines, but with the help of the best artists who did realise what an opportunity they had of enlarging the country's musical horizon, entertainments were soon brought up to a higher level. The success of the weekly and fortnightly concerts soon convinced the unbeliever, and even camp commanders began to have an inkling of the place good music might hold in their world. Few, though, foresaw the day when concerts were to be accepted as work of National Importance, and parties sent down the line by military authorities themselves.

The letter below to Mr. Rothery shows what the Committee were doing by 1918:-

The Horton (County of London) War Hospital,  
Epsom,  
Surrey  
January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1918

Dear Mr. Rothery,

You have sent us many good and successful concerts here – your parties are invariably good – but I do not recollect a more enjoyable and successful one than that of last night. The trial of a 'straight' concert was complete, and the result not to be questioned.

We started with the Persian Garden, which went very well indeed, and had a fine reception. The performers would like to have together for more than the limited time they had here for rehearsal, but, with Mr. Bradley in charge, there was very good *ensemble*, in addition to the individual talent. For the rest of the programme, I believe every item was quite fresh here; certainly there was an entire absence of the tiresome chorus song, and the over-used 'latest' ballad, that everyone – men included – know too well. The artists had the audience so completely in touch that they wished, and offered, to carry on longer than was intended, though it entailed, as they knew, using a late train back.

Near the end Mr. Dressel put on the Slow Movement and Finale of the Mendelssohn Concerto, and for 15-20 minutes absolutely gripped his audience. He fully merited a reception which would have satisfied anyone.

I would like you to find out from the performers their estimate of the evening; I have rarely had such an enthusiastic party to thank afterwards, nor one so convinced that 'music' well done is quite able to hold its own, without the addition of the amusing elements. The chief essential, it seems to me, is to get the right atmosphere, and take care not to let it be lost or spoiled. I hope we may be permitted to repeat the experiment – it is no longer an experiment – with the same party, a similar programme, and, were it possible, yourself in the audience.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank you very sincerely for this particular concert, while remembering very gratefully the many others you have given us. Those given to the bed-patients in the wards are most thoroughly appreciated by the men – the performers almost invariably like them best – but what counts most, by the officials of the hospital, from the ward sisters to the chairman – in fact everyone who is in a position to judge of their value by personal knowledge. A little humour in these is, I

think, valuable; but it is remarkable how popular in all places is a good violin solos, particularly if somewhat brilliant.

The next Monday you may be able to offer I shall be very glad to accept for another straight concert; but if I might ask again, without becoming tiresome, a visit from yourself to make your own judgment would be an honour we should appreciate.

Yours truly,  
(Signed) Rowland Briant.

The soldiers' wives' clubs had to be considered rather differently. Not having attended music-halls so often as their men folk, they were less critical of the manner of the performance. So long as the artists were kind and chose something they understood, it mattered very little whether it was well done or not. They liked a story better than a song at the piano, and a conjuror or ventriloquist better than either. And they loved sickly sentiment. Both audiences distinctly preferred the opposite sex, but whereas the men could listen for hours the women, mostly tired and anxious, could only concentrate for a short time.

Besides the work done for concert artists and their audiences, there were a large number of musicians whose gifts were not interpretative. In the first few months of the war the music teachers' future gave the Council much anxiety. A fair proportion undertook war work, but those unable to do this were, for a time, completely stranded. Air raids closed many sea-coast schools, and economy reduced the staff elsewhere. Private pupils were few and far between. Seeing this, Miss Mathilde Verne set out, early in 1915, to form a committee to collect details, and her offer to collaborate with Music in War Time Committee in this part of their work was gladly accepted. Mr. Allen Gill and Sir John McClure recommended subsidising singing classes in factory girls' clubs, and Miss Verne was co-opted to the Committee to work out a scheme. Later the Women Musicians' Employment Fund suggested Music in War Time should administer, through Miss Verne, the money they had in hand for teachers, together with funds available from the Council, and a special sub-committee of Miss Verne, Mr Colleges, Mr Rothery and Mrs Gotto was selected to deal with this branch of employment, with excellent results to all concerned.

A short time after the amalgamation the aims of Music in War Time Committee and the Council became so closely interwoven that a definite link was desirable, and Mr. Rothery was made Assistant Secretary to the Council as well as Secretary to the Committee. As the Council were unacquainted with the musical world, practically none of their work connected with musicians could be carried through without advice from the Committee. Since the summer of 1915, Mr. Rothery had already undertaken concerts on their behalf, and now had this extra burden to carry, and for several months he, Miss Bill and Miss Tomlins spent hours after the day was supposed to be done helping the Council through arrears. From 1916-17, the years of greatest stress, the work entailed by investigation was so heavy that Mr. Rothery took a large share in that also, and Miss Hullah and Miss Lidderdale occasionally came in to relieve the strain. The applications were so numerous that a large room at Princes' Gate had to be partitioned off into cubicles so that more interviews might take place at the same time. Downstairs a large staff dealt with the correspondence. Under the guidance of Miss Percy Taylor (the Council's Secretary) the cases needing consideration were proceeded with fairly quickly, but the pressure did not relax much till 1918. Miss

Jessy Pott was one of the most faithful helpers and gave two days a week, from 1915-1920, to whatever task was most urgent at the moment.

Various people were at work on the same lines as the Committee and Council, and suggested amalgamation, some because they were short of funds, others on the grounds that one society was better than two, where both had a common aim. Schemes from this point of view were much discussed with large organisations such as the Three Arts, and the Soldiers' Entertainment Fund, but went no further than a monthly comparison of lists with the latter in order that relief work should not overlap.

By March, 1915, concerts were badly needed in France, and Miss Hullah outlined a scheme which was presented to the Princess Victoria and subsequently adopted by Miss Lena Ashwell. Music in War Time had not at this time sufficient funds to send out parties themselves to the base without giving up some of the work in England, and had therefore to be content with recommending people proved efficient in their own concerts. Soon after, the management of foreign entertainments passed under Miss Ashwell's direction in conjunction with the Y.M.C.A., so the two organisations remained in sympathy without active co-operation.

When camps and hospitals came into being all over England the expenses and long railway journeys involved suggested that local branches should be formed at certain points to save sending concert parties all the way from London. Mr. Sydney Nicholson was the first to undertake one at Manchester, where musicians also suffered greatly from the war in its first year. Funds came in quickly, and with them many applications, but the difficult period righted itself so soon, that in a few months he was able to turn his energies entirely to the soldiers and leave the artists to look after themselves. Appointed Director of Entertainments in the Western Command, he became responsible for one or two concerts weekly in some fifty military and Red Cross Hospitals in the district, and by 1918 had given some 7,000 concerts there. His concert work was similar to the original society, except that he was able to order his concert parties *en bloc* instead of separately for a definite series of concerts, and without reference to the artist's financial status.

In November, 1915, another branch of Music in War Time Committee was formed at Leeds under the direction of Mr. Bacon Smith. This also – after the first few grants from the London body – developed into an independent body with its own organisation and funds. In the four years Mr. Smith was able to give 1,420 concert and help a considerable number of artists, and still goes on with the scheme. York had intended to follow suit, but local energy was so hard at work that no central organisation was found necessary. From Birmingham Mr. Thomas, their Red Cross organiser, offered to collaborate in arranging hospital concerts, but here again a society for giving voluntary concerts was formed and became at once self-supporting. With these enthusiasts in charge, this part of England was so well provided for that but for an occasional school, the Committee did no work north of the Midland towns.

Schools or colleges had, in 1915-16, come forward in the most generous way in response to a circular from Miss Hullah and Miss Paget asking them to engage a concert party, or single artists, from the Committee, at a minimum fee of a guinea and expenses. In almost every case they exceeded that fee by many pounds. Some gave their concerts at home; some took a public hall; some engaged local people and sent the proceeds to the fund. The big colleges realised substantial sums. Rugby led the way with £70, Cheltenham Ladies' College close in with £62. After the first visit most



schools sent for a second , and in some cases have ordered a small concert party each term ever since. Through these concerts a few artists have become known as teachers and lecturers, and secured good posts, temporary help thereby turning to permanent use.

Meanwhile, Dr. Walford Davies had never ceased devoting himself to the military and vocal side of the work by taking his men's choir to camps and hospitals all over the country, and filling in gaps where choral societies had lost their members through the war. Like Mr Bacon Smith, in the first instance he was set upon his way by a grant from his original Committee, and, again like him, very soon became financially independent of it. From 1914 to 1919, with the help of Mr Louis Godfrey and Mr Denham, he gave over 300 concerts, besides forming regimental choirs in France in co-operation with the Y.M.C.A.. He also compiled special song-books of suitable tunes – both old and new – for the soldiers to sing themselves.

Other members besides the organisers were active in speeding on success. Mr. Cobbett (who, when Music in War Time Committee joined the Council, relinquished his post as Treasurer) interested himself as ever in chamber music, helping players whenever he could, not only by advice and introduction, but often by a quiet private cheque. In January, 1918, in order to swell the funds he turned Aeolian Hall into a temporary auction-room, and put up a modern British-made violin for sale in the middle of a quartet concert. England, as usual, hesitated to support native work, but a Canadian came to the rescue and bore it off to his own country for the small but welcome sum of £35.

Sir Ernest Palmer was another member to whom the Committee was greatly indebted for material assistance and practical advice. At his suggestion £915 from his Royal College of Music Patron's Fund were set aside by Sir Hubert Parry's consent to pay artists' fees, and at the outset formed the principal support of the Music in War Time Concert Fund.

This Fund, collected entirely for concert-giving and used for art rather than philanthropy, was administered independently of the Council, with Mr. Rothery as its Treasurer. Donations from people in sympathy with the musical part of the work, cheques for entertainments ordered by camps, schools, and private parties, and proceeds from concerts given by helpers of every kind, created by March, 1916, sufficient to make it worthwhile to open a separate account. A year later, in February 1917, Music in War Time Committee registered itself as an independent War Charity. Sir Homewood Crawford made it his particular business to stir up benevolence in the City, and a successful meeting at the mansion house was one of the early results. His interest in bands was both useful and lucrative at the Christmas Albert Hall Fair, and again at a concert there which cleared £500, half of which Music in War Time gave to the Council. Among the many helpers were Miss Ruth Vincent, Mr Ben Davies, Madame Tita Brand Cammaerts, Miss Lily Elsie, Madame Kirkby Lunn.

It was also greatly due to his influence that the Luncheon Hour Concerts began, under the Lord Mayor's patronage, and with a good audience at the opening of the series. Most of these and other concert on the same lines were managed by Mr. Rothery, the printing , advertisements, and financial details all being under his direction, besides a considerable share in the Central Hall programmes. The first of these midday concerts was at Cripplegate, May 1916, admission, 1 1/2 d including

programme. Next, owing to Mr. Stanley Roper's kind help, Bishopsgate Institute was granted free for a further experiment in June. A solo from him on the organ and from three of the Music in War Time artists drew such well-filled rooms that it was decided to start another set at the Central Hall, Westminster. These programmes, arranged by Miss Paget, Miss Hullah and Mr Rothery alternately, were successful enough to be continued throughout the year, winter and summer alike, and would have become permanent had the Board in control not wanted the hall for their own use in 1920.

At Kingsway a winter season of good concerts without a humorous element was run by Miss Hullah, but they attracted only musical people – too small an audience to pay. At the City Temple a similar series to Bishopsgate was tried by Miss Paget, but these also proved so expensive it was thought wiser not to attempt a second year. At Bishopsgate Miss Paget, who, with Mr Roper, managed these programmes, found that two short concerts of 40 minutes each, from 12.10 to 12.50 and 1.10 to 1.50, answered best, but at the other halls the Committee gave only an hour, from 1 to 2 o'clock. At first the artists played and sang to rows of clerks, typists, flappers, and so on, who were restless in the front and consumed sandwiches and chocolates at the back, but in a very short time they learnt to listen quietly and soon became a most delightful audience. When the quality of the concerts became known musical people began to attend every time, and within a year Tuesday was a popular day in all Government offices in the neighbourhood, not only with the staff but with many of the officials in authority as well. Philanthropic work seldom pays for itself, and this was no exception to the rule. In winter a 3d admission made it barely self-supporting, in summer the concerts were run at a loss, but the Committee felt justified in going on, nevertheless, because it was seen they were supplying a real need. Artists had an opportunity of appearing in public, and many of them secured other engagements thereby. Some original work was brought out. The New Poor could afford to hear music without sacrificing anything else, and business men to seal half an hour's rest from their work. Even the profiteer looked in, perhaps in the hope of saving his soul.

This being so, the Committee tried to make the deficit good. Everyone did their best to get the cause known and to keep the pot boiling, though by now it was no easy matter. Sympathy for artists as such was on the wane, and popular concerts, after all, were not indispensable. People were tired of supporting charities in any case, and many could not be persuaded how real a boon music still was in hospitals, and for which it was hoped originally the Luncheon Hour would pay. It was therefore uphill work all the way, and members were kept busy trying to evolve plans by which they could struggle on.

From the beginning Miss Paget had been firm in impressing her friends with the necessity of giving parties for the funds, and she still proved them excellent conscripts. Houses were lent for an afternoon, where short speeches by the Chairman, herself, and others, describing aims and achievement, were followed by a sample concert to illustrate the appeal. Question and discussion seldom failed to produce contributions on the spot, and a collection plate at the door did not wait in vain.

Miss Hullah invented country tours where public concerts paid for free hospital ones. These not only cleared expenses but left a profit, the best series of eight concerts in Devon, managed by Mr. Frederick Taylor, sending to the Fund £100, and another series of six, sending £85. With Miss Violet Evelyn – another of the Committee's

large musical family – she also gave concerts in seaside hotels on the Sussex coast with the same end in view. Here light programmes after dinner and an account of the work by Miss Evelyn gathered in about £200, which, after paying for the hospitals in the neighbourhood, and all expenses, also left money in hand.

Mr. Rothery drew up a scheme whereby all the important musical societies should contribute to a great British Musical Festival, and so increase the fund, but the initial outlay was so considerable the Council hesitated to proceed with it, and at that time the Committee had, unfortunately, neither time nor money to run it alone.

Dr. McNaught had been invaluable in making Music in War Time known to the outside world through the *Musical Times*, and in bringing it successfully before the Carnegie Trust and other benevolent societies, to their great advantage. Unfailing in sympathy, he remained a staunch friend till he died, in October, 1918.

As Chairman Sir Hubert Parry was a tower of strength. His vivid interest, backed by a real knowledge of musical conditions, made him a natural leader. Apart from constant personal generosity to the Society, he gave private help to many an artist outside the Committee's field. An uplifting influence from beginning to end, his death – a few days before that of Dr. McNaught – left the Committee without their best guide.

Some other changes had taken place in Music in War Time Committee. Two years previously Mrs Gotto had resigned her position as the Council's Secretary to Miss Percy Taylor (assisted by Miss Geikie Cobb). Sir Homewood Crawford followed Sir Hubert Parry as Chairman. Dr Vaughan Williams and Mr. Colles were both in France. Mr Arthur Fagge had been elected a new member.

The Committee had many good friends by now, but they needed them more than ever. Well-known societies such as the Orpheus Choral, and Trinity College, who came to the rescue in early days, still sent offerings. The Musical Competitive Festival, Sunday Concert Society and others followed suit later on. The Committee also had the privilege of accepting a donation from H.M. Queen Alexandra.

The Press as a whole was backward, but Mr Harvey Grace opened a Shilling Fund in *Musical Opinion* and wrote graphic accounts of concerts in camp and hospital whenever chance offered in other papers. Mr. Stanley Roper began collection organ recitals at his own church in aid of funds and helped to organise many of the Luncheon Hour Concerts. Miss Edith Kirkwood gathered in £200 at one concert in the Duchess of Somerset's House, and smaller sums on other occasions. Sir Edward Elgar, Mr. Howard Jones, Mr. Donald Tovey, Mr. Harold Darke, Miss Oliver, M. M Garcia, Mr. Robjohns, and Miss Lhombino were among those who gave concerts to raise money, and some of the artists belonging to the Society, Miss Vivien Edwards, Miss Izard, Miss Sasse, and Mr Frederick Taylor did the same. Mr Walters, Miss Swale, Miss Adeline Jones, Miss Violet Evelyn, Mr John Adams, and Mr Ulph Smith helped to arrange tours. Mr Reginald Clark from 1914 to 1919 played the piano for a couple of hours every day to the men at St Mark's Hospital – (a record without parallel among musicians during the war) – and to their great regret died a few months before his wards closed down. Mr. Arthur Fagge put his influence in the operatic world at the Committee's disposal, asking Mr. Ben Davies and other 'stars' to give their services, thereby on one occasion doubling the profits at

the Central Hall. He also helped to arrange some village tours before they became an independent enterprise of Miss Paget.

With this help Music in War Time was able to do some pleasant things besides giving concerts for the people outside the Council's rules. They sent music and instruments to men in France, to prisoners in Germany, to hospital orchestras in England, and bought or helped to buy two pianos, three violins, two drums, a cello, a double bass and a pair of bagpipes. They arranged holidays for a few people, had music copied for a composer whose sight was failing, paid railway expenses for one cinema player and advertisements for another, sent an organiser to a Pierrot Troupe, and gave concerts to help other charities. Byways that opened up were never left unexplored, though not always to such good purpose as these.

A valuable source of riches had been happily discovered in the National Relief Fund, to whom in a large measure – (as it liberated money that would otherwise have had to be used almost entirely in paying artists' fees) they owed the power to explore fresh ventures. In December 1914, Music in War Time first applied, and received, a grant of £40. The next year the Council decided to ask help for their own work, and in July 1915, £2,100 was handed in to their account. Of this £1,000 was to be spent on music, £1,000 on education and £100 on the Maternity Home, on condition the money was used solely for people whose difficulties were owing to the war. A definite proportion was allocated by the Committee to each branch of their work. Out of every £1,000, £200 was set aside for teachers, £100 for relief, and £700 for concert engagements. The grants continued till the Spring of 1919.

There was more help in store. By March 1916, Miss Hullah, had given 336 concerts in soldiers' hospitals, Miss Paget and Mr. Rothery another 170. As these places were seldom able to contribute anything towards expenses, and the number was always increasing, they proved a heavy drain on the Committee's purse, and it was suggested that Music in War Time should ask for a share in the Red Cross Funds. Sir Homewood Crawford, as a member of the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance Committee undertook to point out the position to Sir Robert Hudson, with the happy result that a donation was promised, and eventually a definite grant of £500 allowed every quarter for three years. This was spent entirely on tours and single concerts out of town.

In 1915, the Committee had already found it more economical to string several hospitals on to one railway journey, and now they were able to send parties out for as long as they found convenient. Miss Hullah chose the South Coast, Miss Paget the East, West and Midland Counties. Forty-four fifteen day tours were arranged in every country south of Manchester and Leeds, and others for three days, a week, or a month according to the distance to be covered. Two hospitals a day was the rule wherever transport made it possible. The petrol shortage upset a few plans, but the ambulance generally had to meet someone at the right moment in the right place, and cars were offered whenever possible. Though rations were a difficulty nearly everywhere, yet private hospitality awaited them so often for a whole week or more, that a hotel bill rarely appeared in the accounts. Two of the Red Cross Country Directors arranged their own concerts, and the rest left all details to Miss Hullah and Miss Paget. Each hospital in the county chosen had to be asked whether they wanted a concert, and if so, offered date and hour, and if two of these clashed, both must be satisfied in some way. Trains must fit in, so that the artists arrived in time to rest and explore their billets, and a sequence of places such as would ensure no waste of

energy and expense on the journey. If when the schedule was complete, a hospital was quarantined or closed. It entailed re-adjusting the whole time table to save an empty day. Even with the strictest economy there was still not enough money to go round. Besides country tours Miss Hullah had weekly and fortnightly concerts in the London hospitals, and single ones wherever they were required, and Mr. Rothery supplied outlying districts in the same way. In order that this part of the work might not be hampered, the Red Cross allowed a further grant of £100 a quarter provided the Committee themselves raised an equal amount.

Hospitals and camps always provided most of the Committee's concerts, but in November 1916, Miss Paget found a new outlet in Munition Factories. The experiment was a success, music proving a welcome relief to the monotonous whirr of machinery. The opening concert began with catcalls and clatter, but ended in a storm of applause, and before long she was asked to give two concerts simultaneously during the dinner hour. On these occasions the soloist ran to and fro, doing their share alternately first in one room then the other, as fast as they could, for the girls and boys were as impatient of intervals as soldiers in camp. At Ponders End, Hackney Wick, etc., a concert party attended twice a week and came to be recognised as a really valuable asset, the Directors writing, not only of a general speed up, but that there were 'no complaints on concert days.' From 1916 to 1918 five hundred and four entertainments were given in these factories.

During these two years the Committee's average of three concerts a day could have been doubled had their resources been equal to the demand. More appeals might have been made, perhaps but propaganda was less useful to them than to some societies, because their reason for existence was not immediately evident to people out of contact with it. In 1914 they were reproached with supporting art – apparently of no importance to the War; in 1915 of still doing so when there was other work to be done; in 1916 sympathy was alive but other interests had absorbed it; in 1917 there was no longer the money to spend. The nature of their work made it impossible to go into private details, and without these it remained unnecessary or unwise in the minds of many who otherwise doubtless would have subscribed. Letters such as the following inspired them to go on however:

'I can assure you the engagements I have had from the M.W.T. Committee have been a real help to me and mine, and I don't know what would have happened if it had not been for those engagements – for myself I do not care a pin, but my wife (as well as I) has very indifferent health and I want to give my dear kiddies a good start in the race of life if it is in my power.'

Had there been no such organisation as Music in War Time many who earned their way all through the war would have been dependent on charity or the State in a very short time. That the two objects of the work should have harmonised so well was a happy accident which made for the welfare and solace of both, and without which the soldier would have had few concerts, and most of those very poor, and the artists few audiences and those very small. Also the men would have missed an influence – good music – which, it is not too much to say, meant mental and physical recovery to at least some of them, relief and pleasure to all.

In the summer of 1919 the Council decided to close down its music section, and the final meeting of the combined committees took place on July 31<sup>st</sup>. From then till the following Spring a few members of Music in War Time continued the work alone, Mr. Cobbett resuming his old position of Treasurer. Mr Rothery kindly allowed his

office at the Albert Hall to be used as a temporary meeting place and here on April 31<sup>st</sup> they formally disbanded, leaving the small balance in hand to be administered by Miss Hullah and himself.

It is hoped that like the widow's cruse this balance will be replenished from time to time, so that the Wounded still under treatment may be served with concerts so long as they need them (some thousands of men for a couple of years or more) and that the War Seal and other Permanently Disabled Soldiers may know they are not forgotten in their suffering now the War is over.

The record of Music in War Time is as follows:-

From September to January 1915

177 concerts were given and £537 spent in grants and relief.

In collaboration with the Council, from January, 1915, to August, 1919:-

4,690 concerts were given, £25,000 spent in fees and travelling expenses.

Of this total the Council subscribed £3,505

Prince of Wales Relief Fund                      6,585

Red Cross & the Order of St John    5,773

Private subscriptions, public  
concerts    9,137

— — —  
£25,000

— — —  
— — —

2537 concerts were given in hospitals

|     |     |     |                       |
|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------|
| 750 | ... | ... | Camps                 |
| 128 | ... | ... | Schools               |
| 504 | ... | ... | Munition works        |
| 192 | ... | ... | luncheon hour         |
| 579 | ... | ... | miscellaneous places. |

—  
4,690

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Besides the concert record about 200 musical families received help other than concert engagements and over £2,000 was spent on education, an account of which will appear in the report of the Professional Classes War Relief Council. Forty musicians were employed in subsidised work in which £1,500 was used, and £900 went in training fees and grants.

Several concerts were given in aid of other War organisations, among which may be mentioned the Edith Cavell Fund, and the L'Entente Cordiale Society for the assistance of Les Blessés Nerveux de la Guerre.

From August, 1919, to May, 1920 Music in War Time gave 195 concerts, and spent over £2,000, in fees and expenses.

In connection with the Committee Mr. Bacon Smith gave 1420 concerts at Leeds, and Dr. Walford Davies 300 choir concerts in various camps and hospitals all over England.

From 1914 to 1920, 6785 concerts were given, the amount expended being £27,537.

A.H.

## THE MUSIC IN WAR-TIME COMMITTEE.

In our November, 1914, issue pp. 645-6, we described the proposals of this influentially supported Committee. Briefly its aims were to find or create engagements for native professional performers whom the War had deprived of work, and to keep choral Societies going, as well as to give concerts in camps and hospitals and schools. The report of the operations of the Committee up to the end of 1914 has just been issued. It shows that notwithstanding restricted means, the Committee has been able to carry on a remarkable amount of good work. Up to the end of the year, 146 performers had been engaged at fifty-two concerts, and grants had been made to eight choral and orchestral Societies. All the management of the Society is honorary.

A very good idea of the manner in which the Committee carries on its mission may be gathered from the following extracts from the report (which can be obtained from Mr. J. E. Barkworth, hon. secretary of the Committee, at 13-14, Prince's Gate).

### IN A BASE HOSPITAL.

'Will you give us a concert?' 'Of course we will,' I replied, 'the softest and sweetest...' 'Oh, no you don't,' he interrupted vigorously, 'not at all, please; what we want is good rousing stuff with a chorus if possible.' 'For the *wounded*?' I gasped. 'Certainly. It may surprise you, but we have a gramophone in every ward. Drastic, eh? Well, it does them any amount of good.' And he proceeded to explain their clever Colonel's discovery, that complete quiet was by no means the most satisfactory form of rest cure for men suffering from shrapnel nerves. Why? Because the brain went on repeating the sound of bursting shells from force of habit. Unless this could be effaced in some way, silence (intensifying it) was unendurable, and no one could long bear the strain of this constant mental recurrence without breaking down. Music, he found, effects obliteration best; hence much bodily nourishment, the gramophone between meals, and three concerts a week were his rule.

'When shall we come?' 'Thursday.' 'For how long?' 'Four-thirty till six.'

Day and time appointed, I set about finding a select troupe, and in due course we arrived. The usual war weather prevailed, but the recreation room made that a matter of small moment, for it was warm and cosy. Our party, arriving early, found its bright green card-tables and comfortable arm-chairs still in place, but the good Corporal, anxious to know if everything was all right, asked us to postpone tea till we had set his mind at ease. This was easy. A new pianoforte was waiting for us (the old Broadwood respectfully on the reserve), a large platform, and plants and flags everywhere to make it gay. Half-an-hour later we came back to find everything ready. Soldiers were sitting everywhere. Chairs covered the space where the card-tables had been; benches, window-sills, stools, every nook and corner was furnished with a blue-clad figure waiting for the music to begin. A procession of many too badly wounded to be out of bed was forming up on wheeled stretchers in front, their pale, tired faces revealing sufferings so clearly that, smitten with anxiety lest our songs should after all prove too much for them, I turned again to our Corporal with a question. 'Ah, come on,' he said, 'don't worry about that. Just you watch them.' So we made ready and began.



The little Soprano went up first, and with the opening bars a subtle change passed over the room. The audience had guessed how she was going to sing from the look of her, and found they were right. Gentle murmurs of pleasure grew into a crescendo of clapping as she finished, and heavy eyes drooped perhaps a little less. One or two poor fellows, stretched out full length, craned their heads to get a better view, and a nurse ran off to bring pillows to prop them higher up.

Then our Baritone began a Somerset Folk-Song; and halfway through I heard someone say, 'Go and tell him it's a good concert,' and presently the door opened to admit a tall figure garbed in a dressing-gown, who tottered unsteadily across the floor to sink into the only arm-chair still available. We learned afterwards that he was an officer who had been under shrapnel since the beginning of the War – four months, and a week or two ago had come back a nervous wreck. The usually restful silence of the Home chosen had been torture, but the music cure was doing its work well, and sleep coming back to him by degrees. Soon after he came in others followed, till the hall was overflowing with people. Every doctor, orderly, and nurse who could be spared, looked in for a little while, and a low window was opened so that anyone in the garden could have his share too by standing on tip-toe.

One hero who had lost a leg clapped notwithstanding so joyously all the way through that I remarked upon it, and learned he was to be married next week. Thereupon our Baritone, who has a gift for such things, changed the refrain of his next song to fit the occasion, affording thereby such a fine opportunity for chaff that its victim was thoroughly embarrassed before the end. Our Entertainer has by nature a somewhat thoughtful face, and when he stepped forth and said he would like a few quiet words with the men, they, believing him a Truthful James, prepared to hear them as best they might. It is hard to say who enjoyed the fun most when it dawned that his innocent appearance was but a cloak for guile.

Six o'clock came, and we dutifully paused to be discharged, but the Colonel looked at his men and then at us, and said, 'Just a little more. It's doing them no end of good.' So we gave it for another quarter of an hour, and then finished with a rag-time chorus, audible, I should say, at --; but never mind where. Reticence is always becoming. Little by little those who had come in utterly weary from pain had forgotten all about it, and were whistling, calling for encores, stamping away with perhaps the one leg left, or a crutch, for all they were worth, and it needed an effort to realise they were not hale and hearty men -- if one's eyes were turned away.

Perhaps the nicest tribute was from a young St. George, who said of our bonny contralto as he passed out, 'I could have listened to her all day and all night.' And the next nicest was the invitation to come again.

## SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' WIVES.

Much is heard nowadays of the war fever, its danger and excitement – and those who know it best believe in treating it by inoculation with the milder excitement of music.

Anyone who has addressed 400 or 500 working girls at a big League of Honour Meeting knows that war-excitement, perhaps to their cost. The factory girl of big towns is a strangely excitable being. In common with most people who badly need it,

she abhors good advice, but she loves music, and can bear even good advice when softened by music.

She is no mean critic. She appreciates the difference between second best and best, though she cannot always describe it – as, for instance, the girl who, though she had never heard of tone-colour, said it reminded her of ‘mother’s kettle boiling.’

An audience of such girls, united in sympathy by good music, is ready to hear sympathetically the good advice to which in cold blood they might be less willing to listen.

If we are right, as surely we are, in giving good music to working girls, we owe it even more to working women, especially those whose men-folk are gone out to fight.

A club for soldiers’ wives, that boasts a membership of 500 and a long waiting-list, is a veritable home of music, and a concert there is a very touching sight. The women arrive at all hours, for many are working late, but quietly the room fills up, till not a seat is left.

To ensure quiet, and also to give the mothers a little rest, the babies are all being ‘minded’ in another room, and given the time of their small lives among toys from richer homes than their own.

And for their mothers an evening, which might be sadly or even foolishly spent, passes in pure enjoyment.

There is an interval for refreshment, and then the music begins again-solos and recitations by good artists-choruses by the women. For they are themselves learning to sing in this admirable Club – under the auspices of a good professional teacher – who is glad enough ‘in War-time’ of the unwonted job.

The women love both singing and listening-it all helps to ‘take them out of themselves,’ and even the latest news from the Front, often anxious enough, is for the moment forgotten.

United by a common sacrifice and a common interest, they make a splendid audience, and delight the singers who delight them.

#### CHORAL CAMP CONCERTS.

After some strenuous rehearsals we emerged from the seclusion of a practice room in the Temple into the glare of the White City. Dr. Walford Davies had drawn some fifty recruits chiefly from his own and other church choirs, had arranged for their use two or three dozen national and popular songs, and now the recruits were mobilised into an efficient expeditionary force. The vast hall of the White City would have embarrassed any less fully equipped concert party. At the back of the hall soldiers were playing vigorous games of ping-pong, others were boxing, some were absorbed in chess and draughts; besides there was a floating population whose interest we had to engage, but fifty voices trained to corporate action succeed where individuals fail. We came away feeling that we had made our mark and that the concert had been enjoyed by those who wanted it.

A little later we had another and a very different kind of success, at Fleet: instead of fifty Dr. Davies took only five singers with him (the chief point of his choir is that it can be used in large or small numbers as circumstances require, and the five could do at Fleet even more than fifty could do at the White City). A Corporal met us, and guided us along boggy ground to the tent where the concert was to take place. We started with three national anthems – English, French, and Russian; then came the policeman's song from 'Pinafore.' The soldiers immediately seized on the chorus, and after that the concert became a joyous sing-song with little distinction between performers and audience. Since then our experiences have been many, and at some concerts we have had the help of lady singers engaged by the Committee.

On December 12 we went to Aldershot, and after the concert joined in a hymn at Prayers in which the men sang splendidly. Our train back to town that night was nearly an hour late, so we filled up the waiting time by giving the whole programme of our choruses to three Scotsmen who were in the guard room at the railway station. One joined in the choruses with his eyes firmly closed, and rewarded Dr. Davies with two hot potatoes.

It is hard to say which are the most popular songs. 'The Bay of Biscay,' 'Ben Backstay' (with its chorus of 'With a chip, chop, cherry top'), 'Step Out,' and the 'Poacher' are always a success. In the last one, however, the Tommies always insist on substituting 'O it's nice to get up in the morning, but it's nicer to lie in bed' for the original chorus, 'It's my delight on a shining night.' But not only rousing songs are popular, 'Breathe soft, ye winds' (Paxton) has proved an unfailing success every time we have sung it, and the strange pathos of some of the negro melodies of the Fisk Jubilee Singers appeals very strongly to the men. Often they come to the concert tired out by the day's hard drilling or a route march. Of course, then one must begin by keeping them awake; but once they are awakened there is no need to go on making a noise. At one concert quite recently the men seemed at first almost too tired to be interested; before the end we were able to sing the Jubilee song, 'Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, Lord,' to an audience who listened breathlessly to every note.

There is another side to the activities of the choir which is important to the scheme of the Committee. It is designed to help choral societies by sending detachments of singers to take part in concerts which are not created by the emergency of war, but rather are being carried on under difficulties and in spite of the emergency. Up to the present we have sent out reinforcements to five such places: Battersea Town Hall, the Portman Rooms, the Hampstead Conservatoire, Tonbridge, and the Bishopsgate Institute. We hope to do more in this direction in the coming year, and three other Societies are to be visited shortly. The letters received from all the conductors of Societies to whom we have lent a hand show that this kind of work is helpful to the cause of Music in War-time.

#### SCHOOL CONCERTS.

There is one other class of audience – and that but little diminished by the War – to whom good concerts have proved highly acceptable, viz., girls and boys at school. A cheerier sight cannot be imagined than one of our concerts in a big L.C.C. Secondary School. Anything from 100 to 500 girls, all – even the small ones in the front rows – as keen as possible; a fair number of parents and friends, and the teachers – tired, but never obscured by the daily round of teaching-whose enthusiasm

for their art is specially delightful in its knowing appreciation of the best music. Can a more perfect audience be imagined?

Many of the schools even in London are so far from a concert hall that the pupils seldom hear any music except their own. And for the same reason it is possible in the country to give even greater pleasure than in London. In some cases, concert tours have been proposed to include several schools, and these give pleasure and friendship as well as work and generous remuneration to the artists who take part in them.

#### AN ORCHESTRAL CONCERT.

On December 15 Mrs. Julian Marshall took her orchestra, engaged for the occasion by means of a grant from the Committee, to give a concert to 8,000 Territorials at the White City. Mrs. Marshall writes: 'It was a huge success.

A vast place, packed to overflowing with khaki; there must have been thousands of them. They had not the slightest difficulty in hearing us, and they were a magnificent audience, and most enthusiastic. They said they had never had anything like it. You helped greatly towards this result, so both orchestral players and soldiers are much indebted to your Committee.'

In January, the Committee decided to unite with a more comprehensive body, the Professional Classes War Relief Committee, and by agreement they now take up all the musical side of that Council's work. Money is sadly needed. We hope that some of our readers will be moved to assist or to get assistance by way of subscriptions. As will be evident, the appeal is a double one: the profession needs help, and the wounded in our hospitals need the inspiration and solace which music can give them. Mr. Barkworth will be glad to receive subscriptions at 13-14, Princes Gate. Sir Hubert Parry is the president of the Committee, and many other distinguished musicians are vice-presidents. In this connection, it is due that mention should be made of the similar work being done under the auspices of Messrs. Broadwood and Mr. Isidore de Lara.

## Appendix E: Material Relating to Chapter Seven

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### MUSIC – THE HEALER OF HEROES

How many musical men do you think there are in the army – not necessarily professionals, but men who in the old days took their part in choirs, and orchestras, and bands? Well, in any 2,000 you would find at least twenty-five to thirty-five really musical souls to whom a chance of singing or playing again is like a breath of new life after the horrible sights and sounds of war.

How many men do you think there are who enjoy *listening* to music? You would not be far out if you said 'All of them. Men straight out of the trenches, mud-caked, hungry and ready to drop with fatigue, will stop on their way back for a rest just to listen to a band. Doesn't that speak for itself?

#### Back from the Battlefields

Back they come, battle-worn and sickened to their very souls by long hours of suspense and sights of desolation, brutality, and death. Comrades have been stricken down before their eyes – they themselves have escaped by a constant series of miracles: they have watched the creeping barrage coming nearer and nearer, foot by foot: many have gone 'over the top' through the ghastly horrors of 'No Man's Land' where dead men lie unburied. Sleepless nights and hourly strain, horror, and filth, the roar of guns and the scream of shells, have deadened the very senses of these men or so unstrung their nerves that they are no longer fit to fight. So it goes on, month after month, and if the war is to be won these men must be restored. Restful forgetfulness is what they need – that which shall really occupy their thoughts and give them happiness again. Is there a power on earth, save a return to "Home," which can do this thing for weary, war-strained boys?

What does your Music mean to you?

You, who are musicians know there is. Music can do it. Do you think of your troubles when your whole mind is centred upon reading a music-score, upon keeping your right part in a choir, or coming in on the right beat in an orchestra? Is there anything which can make you so completely forget everything and everybody except your music and the conductor? Even if you are only a listener, do you know of anything that at once soothes and cheers you as music does?

#### The Musician's Opportunity

That is what the Y.M.C.A. knew when it encouraged music in the Huts. And that is what the musicians know who are making a special effort to give our boys at the front better opportunities for music. Men who have come to the Rest Camps utterly broken down have gone back to the front lines after just twelve days, entirely restored in nerve and courage. This has been done by music. It has been made possible by musicians who saw their special opportunity of service and grasped it. Do you wonder they think the results worthwhile? Do you wonder they want your help?

Which will you do?

The Y.M.C.A. MUSICIANS' FUND is asking for £5,000 from musicians at home to help musicians and music-lovers at the front. This money is to be spent entirely upon new music and instruments for the men and upon enabling the Y.M.C.A. to send them more conductors and trainers. Will you help in this great mission of ministering to and helping our war-strained heroes by assisting the Y.M.C.A. Musicians' Fund in at least one of the following ways?

1. By a personal contribution.
2. By asking your friends to contribute.
3. By organizing a Concert, Lecture, Recital, or some form of entertainment in the circle in which you can best interest people in the endeavour.
4. By sending any instruments (old or new) which can be used in some camp.

Cheques should be made payable to the Hon. Treasurer, Dr. H. Walford Davies at 260, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1. All other communications should be addressed to the Organizing Secretary, Miss Katherine Eggar, at the same address.

Under the War Charities Act, 1916, it is necessary that every one arranging a charity concert, etc., should hold an authorisation from the Institution to be benefited. In this case, applications should be made to Miss Eggar as above, stating date, time, place of entertainment, and giving particulars of the class of entertainment it is proposed to organise. A special pamphlet giving full details of the Musicians' Fund, and copies of an article telling a musicians' experience among the musical men at the front, can also be obtained from Miss Eggar. Remember – if you cannot fight yourself, the best thing you can do is to help others to fight. Remember also – this is the musician's greatest opportunity of service.